

THE WAR OF 1939

VOLUME III

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THE RIGHT HON WINSTON CHURCHILL, P.C.

THE WAR OF 1939

A HISTORY DEALING WITH EVERY PHASE OF THE
WAR ON LAND, SEA, AND IN THE AIR, INCLUDING
THE EVENTS WHICH LED UP TO THE OUTBREAK
OF HOSTILITIES

EDITED BY

GEOFFREY DENNIS, M.A. (OXON)

AND

W. GORDON WILLIAMS



VOLUME III

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THE FIRST STAGE OF A TRANSITION

It is with great regret that, upon the publication of this volume, I must cease to edit this History. The growth of other war work has left me with no alternative.

I am glad, however, to hand over to so distinguished a writer as Mr. Geoffrey Dennis, whom I have known during the many years when he was gathering vast experience of world affairs as Director of the Translating Department of the League of Nations Secretariat. Sorry though I shall be to sever my connexion with an undertaking which enabled me to follow the war in all its aspects (instead of concentrating upon the diplomatic side of it, as I am normally tempted to do), I leave with the conviction that the readers of these volumes will gain. For Mr. Dennis is one of the best writers of English today, and is a man of many interests and wide knowledge. With his co-operation the Caxton Publishing Company should produce a history of lasting value as well as of immediate interest.

VERNON BARTLETT.

THE SECOND STAGE OF THE TRANSITION

THE present—third—volume of *The War of 1939* covers the six-months period from December 1st, 1939, to May 31st, 1940.

All divisions of contemporary, as of past, history according to the calendar are as artificial as they are convenient and necessary, and there may be small overlappings here and there ; especially as, for the particular period with which this volume deals, neither the opening date nor the end date happens to mark any decisive phase or clear dividing-line of the war. December 1st, 1939, was one day very much like any other in those first seven months of pre-total war, while May 31st, 1940—towards the end of the Battle of Flanders, in the middle of the Dunkirk evacuation, and on the diplomatic side in the confused last phase of Italian pre-belligerency and in an otherwise indeterminate and relatively quiet period politically—marks no clear crisis of the war. This was to be reached a little later, with the great French defeat and capitulation in June, anticipated in some of our chapters, but reserved for fuller treatment in the next volume.

The principal events of this six-months period from the beginning of December to the end of May were, on land, first the Russo-Finnish War (Chapter 1, Part I), a war aside from rather than within the framework of the main war, which main war remained quiescent on land—the “ phoney war ” of American comment—throughout the winter. In April, spring stirring in the Führer’s blood, came the rape of Scandinavia and the campaign in Norway (Chapter 1, Part II) ; in May, the invasion of Holland, Belgium, and France (Chapter 1, Part III), total war at last—the second or real beginning of the war.

Until the very end of this period the campaign at sea was relatively much more active than the campaign on land ; and it is treated fully in the present volume (Chapter 2). There was the Battle of the River Plate as the major naval event, and the many details of the submarine and anti-submarine war, and of mines, sinkings, searchings, blockade. From the British point of view the Norwegian campaign, too, was more important—and less unsuccessful—navally than militarily.

The war in the air (Chapter 3), though much less intensive than it was soon to become, was during this period fairly important.

Aside from operations, the diplomatic developments (Chapter 4) were of interest and importance, especially as regards Russia, the Balkans, Italy, and the United States. France's tremendous effort is given particular treatment.

The later chapters of the volume deal with various special topics that had significance during this period: the Finance of the War, Publicity and Propaganda, Parliament, and Labour.

GEOFFREY DENNIS.

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CHAPTER I

THE WAR ON LAND

BY JULES MENKEN

I. THE RUSSO-FINNISH WAR

IN all but outcome, the war between Finland and Soviet Russia, between one of the smallest peoples of Europe and the largest white population inhabiting the vastest land area in the world, was a veritable struggle between David and Goliath. Admiration filled the civilized world at the independence and character of the Finns in daring to stand firm in the face of their gigantic adversary; solicitude deepened into anxiety when consideration of the two countries' respective resources raised doubts whether Finland could succeed in her daring defiance; but second thoughts brought fuller realization that, however important the result, to men and women steeped in the true spirit of freedom the matter of real moment is the struggle for right and liberty.

At first glance no contestants could have been less evenly matched. Finland was a pigmy to the Russian giant. The area of Finland (149,800 square miles), if two-thirds again as large as Great Britain, was less than a fiftieth part of the area of Soviet Russia, which spreads over one-sixth of the land surface of the earth. And Finland's population of some 3,600,000 was only a forty-eighth part of the Soviet's 170 millions.

The disparity in armed forces was not less great. Finland's *entire* male population between fifteen and forty-five years of age numbered only about 800,000. Adding older men up to sixty raised the total to about a million, or roughly half the *peace-time* establishment of the Soviet Army. In peace Finland possessed a single Army corps, made up of three infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade, and—included in the cavalry brigade—a company of tanks; the effectives amounted in all to some 30,000 men and officers of all ranks. In war Finnish military strength could be expanded tenfold to about 300,000; but the arms and equipment for this war reserve were not on the same scale as those of the peace-time establishment. In aeroplanes, Finland possessed at most 100 combatant machines.

Finnish artillery—including the coastal guns which made the southern Finnish coast along the Gulf of Finland one of the most strongly defended in Europe—numbered only 200 guns, a slender total of weapons in the most vital single arm for defence against armoured and artillery attack.

By contrast, the Red Army was one of the great military forces of the world in an age when huge numbers, unprecedented mechanical and scientific power, and uncontrolled tyrannies have created vaster and stronger instruments of war than history has hitherto known. Exact particulars of the size and composition of the Soviet Army are not obtainable. But on the best information available, it comprised not less than some 100 divisions (numbering, it is understood, some 18,000 men per division), or roughly 2 million troops in its peace establishment; its reserves, mobilizable for war, numbered several *millions*; its tanks and its aeroplanes ran into thousands. Moreover, a large proportion of these huge forces were maintained in western and northern Russia; while behind the Russian Army stood the great factories and industrial plants, built and organized to produce weapons and munitions, which were perhaps the most important and certainly the most efficient of the establishments and organizations developed under the various Soviet Five-Year Plans.

But not all the military advantages were on Russia's side. Finland, it is true, was weak—fatally weak, as the event proved in those engineering and metallurgical industries which form the essential foundation of modern warfare. Her people, moreover, imbued with civilized ideals of social welfare, had devoted during two decades of peace perhaps too small a share of their national income and their profitable export trade in timber, paper, and paper-making materials to building up reserves of guns and shells, bombs, aeroplanes, and tanks for their defence. Finland was not the only civilized Western nation which made this mistake, and which has paid and is paying for its consequences. But the training of her troops, the ability of her military leaders, and, above all, the character, the energy, and the faith of her citizens did something to redress the disproportionate advantage which overwhelming quantity gave to the wielders of Soviet power.

Finland began the training of her reserves soon after the victories which secured her independence in 1918 and 1919. As between a permanent standing army with an officer class and a volunteer corps such as had won her War of Independence, Finland chose the latter. Soon after



GENERAL MANNERHEIM
THE FINNISH WAR CHIEF

peace was established a Civic Guard was formed, somewhat similar to the British Territorial Army, but placing greater emphasis on individual training in sports and other activities health-giving in peace and serviceable in war. The members of the Finnish Civic Guard, about 100,000 strong, specialized in ski-ing, learnt forest lore, practised camouflage, hardened themselves in night marches. Marksmanship is a Finnish birthright; the Civic Guards developed it to a high pitch. And while fostering individual talents until Finnish athletic prowess became a glory of the modern world, the Civic Guards in their tactical exercises and military training forged the habits of efficient co-operative action essential for defensive war.

In their principal military leader the Finns were fortunate. When Russia attacked Finland, Field-Marshal Mannerheim was seventy-two years old. Few men in Europe had had more varied or more eventful careers. The Swedo-Finnish family into which Baron Carl Gustav Emil Mannerheim was born in 1867 was ancient and honourable. For twenty years he served with high distinction in the armies of Tsarist Russia. He began the Great War of 1914-18 in command of a Guard cavalry brigade; with the friendship of the Tsar as a backing to his own military skill, he ended it in command of a cavalry corps in Rumania.

After the military collapse of Imperial Russia, the Russian Revolution, and the disintegration of the Imperial Russian armies, Baron Mannerheim heard the clear call of his country. His answer accorded with his talents and his character. Finland was then in the throes of her struggle for independence. The new Russia of the Soviets and the old Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II were equally her enemies. Since the defeat of Germany by the Allies removed the threat of Prussian strategic ambitions in the Baltic, the nearest, and then as later clearly the principal, foe of an independent Finland was the Soviet Army. During the Finnish War of Independence Baron Mannerheim proved the immense capacity of his generalship. He read the mind of his Russian adversaries accurately. With consummate insight he anticipated their tactics. He moved his men like a great master of mobile warfare. The Russians advanced, and were allowed to advance. Their apparent success made them confident. Meanwhile, the Finns, under Marshal Mannerheim's direction, took up positions from which they could strike where the Soviet forces were weakest. To these tactics the Russians had no reply; nor any choice except rout or surrender.

Personal qualities of a high order characterize the man more respon-

sible than any other for the victories of 1918-19, which secured the independence of Finland. In person handsome, with a strong physique, regular features, and distinguished bearing, his ease in conversation, superb horsemanship, and skill with a sporting rifle are the fruits alike of heritage, social position, and personal training. He has the mind of a cool and calculating soldier. His powerful but disciplined imagination is a statesman's—prudent, sagacious, far-sighted. Twenty years later the same vision, self-control, and skill that guided Finland successfully through her War of Independence were again to stand his country in good stead. In the Russo-Finnish War of 1939-40 these qualities were indeed pitted against forces too great in sheer mass to be overcome; but they sufficed, with the heroism and self-sacrifice of his countrymen, to win for Marshal Mannerheim and for the Finnish people the respect, the admiration, and the honour of liberty-loving men and women throughout the world.

About the qualities of the Russian armies and leaders far less is known, partly because concealment is a military necessity everywhere, partly because deliberate Soviet policy has ringed Russia with a thick, almost impermeable screen through which only the scantiest accurate knowledge can escape to the outside world. What knowledge about the Russian soldier has seeped through confirms previous experience of him throughout the centuries. Personally courageous and often energetic, his blind devotion and unflinching obedience to orders deserve a better fate than death in struggles for which his ignorance holds no key of understanding even when deliberate dishonesty has not wilfully misled him. But throughout the mass of Russian armies, personal bravery and some training in the use of weapons seem to have little backing in equipment, organization, or leadership. In guns and munitions, in tanks and biplanes, the Russian supply organization did not, it is true, fail the Russian soldier on this occasion. But many of the Russian troops were miserably clad in uniforms totally inadequate against the great cold of the Finnish winter; much of the material was faulty and ill cared for—the mechanical ineptness of the ordinary Russian, whether engineer or soldier, being here a part at least as important as other defects in higher ranks; the supply organization was weak, ill-planned, and fitful; while the officer corps had suffered from the great "purges" of a few years before. In striking contrast to Mannerheim on the Finnish side, even the names of the principal Soviet commanders in Finland are hardly known to the Western world.

Nevertheless, for all its shortcomings, the Soviet Army possessed the one essential quality which a successful campaign against Finland called for. That quality was size—and therefore the capacity to withstand and replace casualties, however great and terrible. After the outbreak of war the casualties were not long in forthcoming.

A line running roughly south-eastwards across Finland from the northern tip of the Gulf of Bothnia to the northern tip of Lake Ladoga divides the country into two parts, distinct in physical character, development, and population. North of this line to the Varanger Fjord and the Arctic Ocean Finland is a land of hills some 4,000 feet high, gradually merging into small plateaux about half that elevation. This rugged land is rather thinly forested and its population is small and sparse. In the extreme north, near Petsamo, well within the Arctic Circle, are important nickel deposits, as yet largely undeveloped. South-westwards of the Bothnia-Ladoga line is much lower-lying country, dotted with countless lakes, whose combined area covers a ninth of the total surface, threaded by the rivers and streams and waterways that connect them, and covered thickly with well-preserved fir and spruce forests. Practically the whole of Finland's railway system and the great bulk of her industry and population occupy this half of the country.

Finland's frontier with Russia falls into two parts. At the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish War, the longer frontier ran the whole distance of Finland's eastern territory from about the middle of the eastern shore of Lake Ladoga to the Varanger Fjord and the Rybachi Peninsula, near Petsamo, in the north. Some 750 miles in extent, this frontier was protected naturally by the rugged character of the terrain and by the forests which over much of its extent could be penetrated only along a few forest roads. The shorter and more important sector of the frontier ran along the so-called Karelian Isthmus, a strip of land some forty to fifty miles wide between the Gulf of Finland on the west and Lake Ladoga on the east. Here the terrain was relatively flat; and apart from the important barriers offered by an extensive lake system, the defences of the Karelian Isthmus were, and had to be, man-made.

The famous Mannerheim Line, Finland's defence on the Karelian Isthmus, like the Siegfried Line on Germany's western frontier, was not really a "line" at all, but an extensive system of fortifications in depth. The Mannerheim Line contained far less concrete and steel than the

Siegfried Line—the consequence, among other reasons, of Finland's small resources. It was based wherever possible on the lakes and rivers of the Karelian Isthmus. In the eastern half of the Isthmus, Lakes Muolaa, Äyräpää, Vuoksen, and Suvanto, with their connecting waterways and rivers, formed an important and, to the very end, impregnable system of natural water defences. Taipale, between Lake Suvanto and Lake Ladoga, was the easternmost strong point on this sector of the Line, and the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the war. Between the lake system on the east and the Gulf of Finland on the west lay a stretch of fairly flat land about twenty-five miles wide, marshy in places and containing a number of smaller lakes, but less well adapted by nature for defence, and consequently requiring more works and preparations. The village of Summa, approximately in the centre of this area, was one of its keypoints. Off the coast of the Gulf of Finland lay the strategically important island of Koivisto, strongly fortified and armed with heavy coastal artillery, which was to prove a thorn in the Russian flank for many weeks.

The defences of the Mannerheim Line were designed by Field-Marshal Mannerheim himself. For many months he studied the terrain, walking himself over every foot of the land, considering every rise and every gully, taking advantage of every natural feature which could help to meet attack with artillery or rake with machine-gun fire the invaders' flanks. Steel and concrete casemates and pill-boxes, cleverly devised tank traps, barriers and obstacles—all were planned and built with consummate skill to enable a minimum of man-power and fire-power to offer a maximum of resistance.

The strategy of the Russians and the Finns respectively was determined by geography, by available resources, and by the military problems which offensive and defensive warfare involved. The Russians were compelled by their objective—the military defeat of Finland—to attack. The Finns of necessity contented themselves with strategic defence—on which, indeed, their entire policy and preparations were based—though occasionally a tactical counter-offensive against Russian lines of communications and supplies became temporarily practicable. The Russian attack was geographically restricted to a comparatively small number of areas. First and foremost, the Karelian Isthmus; then half a dozen places along Finland's long eastern frontier; finally, Petsamo in the extreme north—these were the obvious and necessary starting-points for Russian offensives. The areas of Russian attack

determined broadly the areas of Finnish defence. But whereas for Finland a primary military objective, upon which everything else depended, was to husband her resources and, above all, to spare her men, Russia could afford to be prodigal of her vast numbers of troops and huge accumulations of material. She did, in fact, squander them to an extent which must have imposed a heavy strain even upon the enormous Soviet organism.

The difference in numbers and resources influenced Russian strategy—and ultimately compassed Finland's defeat—in another way. Russian victory in the end turned upon the Soviet Army's ability sheerly to wear down the Finnish defenders who guarded the Karelian Isthmus. But Russian methods of attrition would obviously be aided by compelling the Finns to defend as many and as widely dispersed areas as possible; for the drain of material and reserves thus imposed on them must clearly prevent front-line Finnish troops on the Isthmus from being adequately relieved, and would thus heighten the effects of cumulative fatigue—in unequal contests an enemy even more insidious and relentless than the attacking foe. With this purpose, the Russians framed their strategy so as to attack all along the 750-mile Finnish frontier from Ladoga to the Arctic Ocean. The areas and objectives chosen for attack naturally possessed military significance of their own. If any of these Russian efforts succeeded, the strategic consequences for Finland would be dire. For example, the railways leading to Sweden or from southern to northern Finland might be cut; or attack north-east of Lake Ladoga might turn the Mannerheim Line and take its defenders in the rear. But even if all these secondary strategic efforts failed, they ensured indirectly the success of the Russian's main purpose: they absorbed Finnish troops, used up Finnish weapons and munitions, dispersed Finnish efforts, increased Finnish uncertainty and strain, and prevented suitable or sufficient relief for Finnish troops on the Karelian Isthmus, who were exposed to the full and continuing blast of Russian attack and the crushing weight of Russian numbers.

Against this background the main events of the war are quickly recounted and understood. The war began on November 30th, 1939, when the Russians invaded the Karelian Isthmus and assailed various minor Finnish advanced positions. At the same time an attack was launched on Petsamo in the extreme north, while Russian columns also advanced at a number of points on Finland's eastern frontier in offensives

which were doubtless meant to be—but, on the information available, were in fact not quite—simultaneous.

On the Karelian Isthmus Soviet progress was slow. The Russians reached the outlying positions of the main Summa defences of the Mannerheim Line as early as December 7th, 1939. They continued to make strong but unsuccessful attacks spasmodically for about six weeks ; but on this front fully organized, determined, and unceasing Russian efforts to effect a break-through did not begin until February 1st, 1940.

The Petsamo front saw quicker and more substantial successes. The Finns were driven steadily back—blowing up the nickel mines at Salmijärvi, about twenty-five miles south of Petsamo, in their retreat, and laying the country waste, so that the invaders might have no protection against the Arctic cold. Russian reinforcements brought up quickly from Murmansk strengthened the attacking forces, and as early as December 19th, 1939, Soviet troops had reached Nautsi, about seventy miles south-west of Petsamo.

Nautsi, like Salmijärvi and Petsamo, is on the Arctic Highway, which runs from Liinahamari, the harbour of Petsamo on the Varanger Fjord and the Arctic Ocean, to Rovaniemi, a station on the Kemijärvi railway some sixty miles north-east of the head of the Gulf of Bothnia. A successful Russian advance down the Arctic Highway, like other Russian efforts aimed at Kemijärvi from the east, would have cut off the land connexion between Finland and Sweden—a strategic objective of great importance, since during winter, when the Gulf of Bothnia is frozen, munitions and other essential war supplies from Sweden and the west could reach Finland only by railway.

From Nautsi along the Arctic Highway to Ivalo, some forty miles farther south-westwards, the terrain favoured the invaders. To the west the road neared or skirted the shore of Lake Inari ; elsewhere sparse woods of birch and frozen lakes and marshes presented ground suitable for motorized advance. At Ivalo, where the Finns had built fortified positions, a sixty-mile belt of forest and hills threatened to make Russian movement more difficult. But whether knowledge of this natural obstacle inhibited effort, or for other reasons, the Russians did not progress farther than Nautsi during the remaining months of the war. Indeed, they did not hold Nautsi during the whole of that period ; for when Finnish anti-tank defences, which were weak at the outset, had been strengthened by modern anti-tank guns, Finnish counter-attack succeeded in pushing the Russians back to Høyenjärvi, some ten miles north of

Nautsi, where, until hostilities were concluded, a slender barricade marked the lines of the opposing forces.

On the Petsamo front the war was a struggle in darkness, silence, and cold. The temperature in early January fell as low as -41 degrees Fahrenheit—the equivalent of 73 degrees of frost. In such cold the breath freezes even inside the nostrils, feet and hands soon become numb in the warmest clothing, and the body's effort merely to keep alive leaves little margin over for the fierce demands of war. As the Russians found, the intense cold itself proved a potent ally of the defenders. Among the Finns, Lapp contingents, inured to the cold and familiar with the land from childhood, were among the best troops. Yet patrols went forth day after day to guard the forest or even to attack. The patrols were mounted on skis, camouflaged in white, and invisible at ten or fifteen paces. Each man carried an automatic pistol in his belt. A specially sturdy soldier in the patrol bore a sub-machine gun. Munitions and supplies were dragged on sledges. Small Finnish horses hauled guns mounted on broad skis some two feet wide. Amid the palpable silence of the snow-covered land or the fierce shriek of the northern winter's winds, such patrols, picking their way by landmarks no strange eye could read, stalked their foe throughout the black Arctic days. When found, a searchlight flamed through the dark, the staccato clatter of machine-guns broke the silence or cut the howl of the wind; and the thick pall of winter descended again upon the land.

The Petsamo campaign was only one of the numerous attacks which the Finns had to meet along their 750-mile eastern frontier. The Russians—in addition to their principal purpose of dispersing Finnish forces, fatiguing Finnish troops, exhausting Finnish supplies, and preventing adequate relief and rest for the embattled Finnish units on the Karelian Isthmus—appear to have aimed at half a dozen main strategic objectives in this extensive area. Attacks from Olonetz in Russian territory along the north-eastern shore of Lake Ladoga at Salmi, Pitkäranta, and Kitelä; an advance against Suojärvi, some sixty miles north of Salmi, and against Loimola, some twenty-five miles north of Kitelä; and movements against Aglajärvi and Tolvajärvi (about twenty-five miles northwards of Loimola)—these all had the primary purpose of taking the defences of the Mannerheim Line in the rear—though the Aglajärvi-Tolvajärvi column, with supporting Russian troops a little farther north, also aimed at cutting the easternmost of Finland's north-south railway lines near Joensuu, some sixty-five miles north-west of

Lake Ladoga. Another attempt against this railway—whose strategic importance, in addition to its value for moving Finnish forces towards points of special danger, lay in its double connexion with the capital, Helsinki, and reserves of men and supplies in south-west Finland on the one hand, and with Oulu and Sweden north-westwards on the other hand—was made in the general direction of Lieksa and Nurmes, respectively about fifty and seventy-five miles north and north-west of Joensuu. A third advance, with the same broad strategic purpose, was made at Kuhmo, some forty miles north of Nurmes. More important still was the attempt at Suomussalmi and Lake Kianta, about fifty miles north of Kuhmo and ninety miles north of Nurmes, to cut Finland at its narrowest point, the so-called "waistline" between Oulu on the Gulf of Bothnia (and the vital railway to Sweden) and the frontier just east of Suomussalmi. Along this waistline Finland is only 125 miles wide; and if the country could have been severed here, and simultaneously shut off from connexion with Sweden by land, it is obvious how greatly the Russians would have gained. The last Russian attempts were at Kuolajärvi and Salla, yet a further 150 miles north of Suomussalmi. Here two strategic objectives presented themselves. To the west and south-west of Kuolajärvi lay the railhead at Kemijärvi of the branch railway which joined—and cut some ten miles from the Swedish frontier—the main coastal railway from Oulu to Sweden. Midway along this branch line stood Rovaniemi, the southern terminus of the Arctic Highway. To the north-west of Kuolajärvi lay Sodankylä, also on the Arctic Highway, approximately half-way between Rovaniemi and Ivalo, from which the Finnish defences south of Petsamo might have been taken in the rear.

Despite these extremely serious strategic threats from greatly superior Russian forces, the Finns not merely held all essential places along their eastern frontier throughout the war, but repeatedly and decisively defeated their enemy. North-east of Lake Ladoga, after a three-day battle, they destroyed two Soviet regiments at Tolvajärvi on December 14th; while at Aglajärvi they won a similar victory on December 23rd. At Lake Kianta and Suomussalmi, in what were, for the Russians, the most overwhelming disasters of the war, the Finns checked the enemy on December 15th, practically annihilated the 163rd Russian Division at Lake Kianta on December 31st, and followed this by the complete destruction of the 44th Russian Division on January 8th. On the Salla front Finnish forces won a substantial victory on December 19th–20th;

and, though fighting continued in this area, another Finnish success was achieved about a month later. At Kuhmo the Russian forces sustained a major defeat on January 30th and 31st. Finally, though Russian pressure continued along the north-east shore of Lake Ladoga throughout the war, and though the Finns yielded a certain amount of ground there, the Soviet troops never achieved a major strategic success in this area, in which just before the war ended the Finns again destroyed, on March 2nd, an entire Russian tank brigade—the 34th—after a struggle long drawn out only because Finnish numbers were so small.

In heroism, coolness, and skill these Finnish victories rank high in the whole history of warfare. They were won over an enemy immensely more numerous, armed and equipped with vast quantities of the most modern and most efficient weapons, and backed by limitless further supplies of troops and arms. The Russians, of course, made mistakes. At the outset particularly their forces were inadequately clad and shod against the rigours of a northern winter. Later reinforcements were better provided in this respect. Again, the Russians underestimated the strength of the resistance they would encounter—a political error which in the end cost them dear. Russian tactical methods were completely unsuited to the work in hand. Mechanized columns advanced along the narrow forest roads as though on parade down friendly city streets. Scouts and flanking defences were inadequate. Trained ski detachments were few. Mechanical breakdowns caused fatal blocks. Many of the troops sent were ill-trained; thousands had the steppe-dweller's primitive fear of Finland's dark and unfamiliar forests.

But when every allowance is made for all these shortcomings, and for the tactical inexperience of the Soviet officers—for which, no doubt, the great purges were in part responsible—the accomplishment of the Finns remains superb. Their tactics were faultless. As the Russians advanced, the Finns withdrew. When Russian columns had left behind them the homeward route to safety, the Finns closed in and cut off their supplies and their retreat. At night great fires were sometimes lighted near the Russian lines. When the cold and miserable Soviet troops gathered round the welcome blaze, Finnish marksmen, firing from the silent gloom of the forests, picked off hundreds. By degrees, cold and the hunger of men whom supply columns could not reach wore down Russian resistance. Then the Finns closed in and completed the work of destruction which Nature had begun.

While the Finns were winning their great successes in the eastern theatre of war, heavy Russian pressure on the vital front of the Karelian Isthmus continued. As early as December 4th, 1939, it was stated that only two Finnish divisions, numbering some 38,000 men, faced at least four or five Russian divisions, or some 100,000 men. On December 8th a neutral military observer estimated that the Russian forces in this sector numbered three divisions at the outbreak of the war—and a further three divisions along the Finno-Russian frontier from Lake Ladoga north to the Arctic; while a week later these Russian effectives were increased to seven divisions and a tank corps on the Isthmus—and to five divisions and a tank corps from Lake Ladoga northwards. The odds against the Finnish defenders on the Isthmus front were thus, even at this early stage of the war, as high as five to one; and they were to increase as the months progressed. On February 22nd, fourteen Soviet divisions were reported to be packed in a sector only fifteen miles wide on the western half of the Karelian Isthmus; while on February 29th a further six divisions were stated to be available on the eastern half, where the almost continuous line of lakes, rivers, and waterways afforded less opportunity for the use of troops. In numbers, the Russian total on the Isthmus alone, allowing for non-divisional and non-combatant units, was thus upwards of 400,000 men at the close of the war. Though the number of the Finnish defenders on the Isthmus is not authoritatively known, they can scarcely, on a favourable estimate, have exceeded some 75,000 to 100,000 men.

The skilfully planned and staunchly defended Mannerheim Line held for weeks. December saw violent, repeated, but unsuccessful onslaughts against it, with heavy Russian losses, but no corresponding gains. The Russian High Command, it may be conjectured, learnt by initial failure that Russian tactics must be altered, or that the volume of pressure must be increased. Whether the first alternative was seriously considered is not known; but a relative pause during January and the fierce and relentless fighting which began in February showed that the second alternative was the one decided upon. As the figures given prove, January must have been used by the Soviet leaders for gathering reserves and organizing supplies; for when the attack on the Karelian Isthmus which was to prove fatal to the Finns was begun on Thursday, February 1st, 1940, its volume bore witness to the quantities of men and materials which the Russians by then had available.

The artillery preparation for this attack continued for six hours.

Innovations in detailed technique were also introduced. Strong armoured sledges, some twelve feet long, protected on the front, sides, and top by heavy steel, were pushed or dragged by Russian tanks close to the Finnish lines. At the appointed time, infantry and machine-gun detachments leapt from the sledges, the tanks pressed forward, and the sledge-borne troops attacked. Meanwhile, light tanks moving on the Russian flanks threw out smoke screens ; and low-flying Russian aeroplanes repeatedly bombed or machine-gunned the Finnish positions.

At first the Russian attacks were unsuccessful. After ten days, for example, an uncensored report by a Swedish eyewitness stated that, although Russian artillery had smashed a few concrete pill-boxes in advanced Finnish positions, the main defences remained secure. The Russians, according to this observer, had managed to bring their firing-line fifty or a hundred yards forward along the 700-yard No-Man's-Land which divided attacker from defender ; but the work which the Finns had put into strengthening their defences since the war started, the stronger and deeper-dug casemates, the felling of trees to give free firing range, and the tree stumps, three feet high and invisible in the deep snow, which had been deliberately left in order to hamper the enemy's tanks and infantry when attacking, all presented most serious difficulties which the Soviet forces were at first unable to overcome.

The Russian reply was to increase and intensify the hail of shells which their artillery poured on the Finnish lines ; to attack and attack again by day and by night so that the Finnish troops were robbed of all opportunity for rest. On February 13th the Finnish General Staff authorized the statement that " nowhere in a limited area has such an amount of war material ever been used before " as the Russians were then employing on the Karelian Isthmus. On that front the Russians, in the Summa sector alone, had fired in a single day 300,000 shells along a line some fifteen to twenty miles long—an average of 15,000 to 20,000 shells per mile ; and this rate of fire, it was stated, had continued for several days. Even during the War of 1914-18 this rate of fire had rarely been reached, though the British-French Army did attain such a maximum during the Battle of the Somme. The Russian achievement, backed, moreover, by incessant bombardment from hundreds of aeroplanes, testified to the vast quantities of munitions which had been brought up by the Russian supply organization, and to the immense numbers of guns which were employed in the struggle.

Against the combined foes of high explosive, steel, and fatigue, the

Finns, though fighting dauntlessly, were obliged to give way. Step by step they yielded ground on the western half of the Karelian Isthmus. On February 28th the Finnish garrison on Koivisto Island, the strategic advance post which safeguarded the city of Viipuri (Viborg) and the main southern Finnish coast from flanking attacks across the ice of the Gulf of Finland was forced to retire. The Russian advance gradually brought them up to the outskirts of Viipuri itself. Behind Viipuri, further defences had indeed been prepared, which the world expected the Finns to defend with the same staunchness, discipline, and dauntless courage as they had hitherto displayed in their magnificent fight. The immediate issue appeared to lie between the heroic Finnish defence in the face of tremendous human and material odds on the one side, and the traditional bravery of the individual Russian soldier backed by inexhaustible resources on the other side.

In this situation the successful continuance of Finnish resistance turned on the outside world—on the question whether help in men and materials would be forthcoming; and whether it could reach Finland soon enough, and in sufficient quantities. The gallantry and tenacity of Finland's fight had awakened world-wide sympathy and, more important to a people in dire need, had brought into the field numerous volunteers from many countries. An important contingent came from Sweden and Norway, some 30,000 strong, and yet inadequate to the need. And though other countries—Sweden in particular—had drawn heavily on available supplies of arms and munitions, and had accelerated the output of armament works, the quantities of material that could be forthcoming from what was essentially a non-official effort were necessarily limited and, in fact, insufficient. Only full and official intervention by Powers which possessed the means as well as the will to help could turn the scales in Finland's favour.

Discussions on this question had agitated the Scandinavian Governments from the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish War. The fate of their countries was plainly linked, in the near or remote future, with the fate of Finland. But at this point the war impinged on and was bound up with the struggle which the Western Allies were waging against Germany. Britain and France, though slow to realize the nature and magnitude of the strategic issues involved, did in the end grasp them. On February 5th, 1940, the Allied Supreme War Council approved plans for helping Finland. Including the forces required to guard

communications against possible German attack through Norway and Finland, the Allies contemplated sending an expedition numbering about 100,000.

The dispatch of this Allied Expeditionary Force was contingent, however, on a request from Field-Marshal Mannerheim and on the assent of Norway and Sweden, the two countries through whose territory (since Germany had closed the entrance to the Baltic) British and French troops and materials would have to pass. In the end, the Field-Marshal did not make the formal request which the Allied plan contemplated, because diplomatic soundings and authoritative public statements in Sweden and Norway showed quite clearly that these countries would not give passage to the projected Allied force. Indeed, the Swedish and Norwegian Governments, far from welcoming, or even accepting, this idea, actually intimated their determination to resist by force an Allied attempt to send organized and official aid to Finland across their territories. Though a detailed account of the negotiations which led to these results, or rather this lack of results, had not been published at the time of writing (July 1940), there is no doubt that the principal cause of the Swedish and Norwegian refusal to give passage to British and French forces lay in German pressure and German warnings. Such Allied forces, besides helping Finland, would also have threatened the supplies of high-grade Swedish iron ore which were vital to Germany's war effort; and apart from all other considerations, this risk was one which Germany could not and would not accept.

When it became clear that, wherever the responsibilities might lie, no substantial and official help from the Allies would be forthcoming, the Finnish leaders decided—with death in their hearts—to make peace. On the Karelian Isthmus, however, as indeed on other fronts, preparations to continue the struggle were made up to the last, and the fight itself went on to the end. During the final week, the Russian forces smashed their way through the main defences on the west of the Isthmus and gained a foothold on the north-west shore of Viipuri Bight. Even this need not have been the end, for the Finns had prepared and were retiring to new lines behind Viipuri. But by the time fighting ceased at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 13th, 1940, the outcome of further struggle by unaided Finland against Soviet Russia was no longer in doubt. Against the weight of men, explosive, and steel which Russia could bring to bear, flesh and blood and the utmost bravery of spirit in a force deficient only because it was too small could not prevail.

The terms of the peace between Finland and Russia, which was concluded in Moscow on March 12th, 1940, were extremely severe. The peace treaty contained, it is true, no political demands by Russia on Finland, and left the Finnish defence forces intact, if temporarily exhausted. The Petsamo nickel mines were also allowed to remain on Finnish soil. But Finland was required to cede substantial areas which contained over 10 per cent. of her population—for whom new homes had to be found elsewhere; a large proportion of the most fertile land in the country; Viipuri itself—the second city and second exporting port of Finland; and certain less important centres. Russia obtained the lease of the peninsula of Hangö for thirty years at an annual rent of 8 million Finnish marks, and the right to establish there a military base, a garrison, and air units. Russia also secured free transit rights for Soviet nationals, Soviet goods, and Soviet commercial planes passing across the Petsamo region into Norway. Finally, the two countries undertook to resume economic relations and to negotiate a new trade treaty.

The territorial cessions which Russia demanded and obtained comprised an area lying south of a line running approximately from a point a little west of Viipuri north-east to Porosozero in Russia itself; and also a substantial wedge-shaped sector deep into Finnish territory as far as Kuolajärvi, Salla, and Markkäjärvi, the scene of fierce fighting and great Finnish victories during the early stages of the war. With this latter cession was coupled an undertaking by Finland to construct, jointly with Russia, a railway between the existing railway at Kemijärvi and Kandalaksha, a Russian town on the Murmansk railway and the White Sea.

Strategically, the latter concession will make it easier in future for Russia—should she so desire—to cut Finland at or near her "waistline," and also to attack Sweden along a route of obvious strategic importance. For Finland, however, the territorial changes in this northern area are far less critical from a military and strategic standpoint than the districts ceded in the south. These include the whole of the Karelian Isthmus, all the Finnish shore of Lake Ladoga, and the defensively valuable terrain north-east of Lake Ladoga which the Finns held throughout the entire war on the whole with ease, and certainly with brilliant success.

These changes in Finland's southern frontier have a strategic significance which the future may well prove to be even more serious for the life of the Finnish people than the loss as such of valuable territory, of the strategic railways in the ceded area, and of Viipuri and other important

towns. The new southern boundary between Finland and Russia is drawn gravely to Finland's disadvantage. The main problem of her defence against Russia is one of relative numbers and material. The defence of the Karelian Isthmus succeeded in stemming the Russian tide for three months because the defensive line was short enough to enable Finland's slender man-power to hold it in sufficient strength. On her new and longer frontier, this vital advantage has been lost.

To Russia the cost of victory was tremendous. As early as the end of January 1940—that is, after little more than two months of war—Russian casualties were conservatively estimated at about 120,000 men. Vast quantities of material were also lost. When the struggle finished in March, after a further two months' fighting, this total cannot well have been less than doubled, and may even have been tripled. Russian losses in men were thus roughly on the same scale as the entire forces of which Finland disposed throughout the whole conflict; Russian losses in material, though not exactly known, were also enormous. And though Finland suffered far smaller casualties, both absolutely and proportionately, the blows inflicted on her minute man-power were none the less heavy and important.

But the true lesson of the war is not to be learnt merely by contemplating the Russian gains or the numbers lost on both sides. The Finnish War shows yet again how strong modern defence can prove even in face of immensely superior attacking forces. It also demonstrates how essential are adequate air armament and artillery to effective defence. Had Finland possessed local mastery of the air, she could have destroyed—or at the least dislocated—the supply organization behind the Russian lines on the Karelian Isthmus and could thus have prevented the enemy from assembling the weight of metal that ultimately proved fatal. If Finnish air power had risen beyond this, it might even have struck successfully at the great producing works and depots in and near Leningrad—a blow which would have delayed, and might perhaps have prevented, a Soviet victory. If Finnish artillery, munitions supply, and fighter and anti-aircraft defence behind the Finnish lines on the Isthmus had possessed greater volume and power, an adequate reply might also have been made to the devastating Russian artillery fire which in the end dislodged Finnish casemates and pill-boxes and rendered many of them untenable and ineffective.

The Finnish War also proved that in modern warfare the defence, to be effective, must have a certain minimum volume and mass in relation

to the attacking forces. Finland failed—essentially—because of her small numbers. Her troops wearied of slaughter. They could get no rest, and little sleep. However many Soviet soldiers they killed, yet more came on—and the new divisions were fresh. It is true that Russian casualties were enormous; but they would have had to be much larger still before they could have led to widespread Russian refusal to fight or have otherwise compelled the Soviet rulers to halt. And because she was too small, to inflict such decisive losses was beyond Finland's power.

The Finnish War teaches one other lesson, greater than any of the material lessons its rich experience contains. When all is said, when every allowance is made for the courage of the individual Russian soldier and the adequacy, despite grave shortcomings, of Russian organization and supply, the fact remains that Finland's defence was a miracle of bravery, intelligence, discipline, fortitude, and character. Russia defeated Finland in one of the most unequal struggles the world has ever seen. But the Finnish people remains unvanquished. Thus the Finnish War drives home again the lesson which this age of materialism and machinery tends most easily to forget: that in the end men and nations can only be conquered when the strongholds of the spirit have fallen.

2. DENMARK AND NORWAY

When Germany invaded Denmark and Norway on Tuesday, April 9th, 1940, three strategic purposes were served. The first was defensive. For many weeks Swedish iron ore, which was essential for Germany's steel supply and armament production, had been continuously shipped to German ports from the Norwegian port of Narvik. In peace-time this route was normal during the winter months, when the Gulf of Bothnia was ice-bound and shipments could not be made from the Swedish port of Lulea. But German vessels not merely took their ore cargoes on board at Narvik—a proceeding which, while Norway remained a neutral State, was wholly legitimate according to the laws of war; they also, in fact, violated Norwegian neutrality by hugging the coast inside the three-mile limit of Norwegian territorial waters. This was a serious hole in the Allied blockade. That Germany should thus be taking illegitimate advantage of Norwegian territorial waters to obtain cargoes of iron ore without which her war effort must have been handicapped—while at the same time she was waging her war against Allied and neutral shipping with complete ruthlessness and callous inhumanity—created a situation which was plainly intolerable.

On March 28th, at the sixth meeting of the Supreme War Council in London, the Allies decided in principle to bring this state of affairs to an end. On April 8th, action to carry out this decision was taken. The Norwegian coast was mined at three places, so chosen that shipping would be forced out on to the high seas, where Allied naval forces could deal with enemy vessels without infringing international law or Norway's neutrality by war-like action inside Norwegian territorial waters.

Although Norway immediately protested, it nevertheless appeared at first sight that the German invasion of Norway was a reprisal for the Allied mine-laying and was designed to ensure to Germany continuous supplies of an essential material of war. This early impression seemed the more justified since Germany's simultaneous invasion of Denmark—which was easily understood as an essential strategic step in her Norwegian campaign—endangered much-needed food supplies which Germany had been obtaining from her Danish neighbour. This peril, in turn, arose from the fact that Danish agriculture was very largely dependent upon foreign countries for fertilizers and feeding-stuffs for its large cattle population. While Denmark was neutral, the Allies allowed these materials through their blockade. But without fertilizers and feeding-stuffs from abroad, the structure of Danish agriculture was bound to collapse; its cattle and pigs would have to be slaughtered; and in such circumstances the bacon and butter which Germany needed to offset the huge shortage in her own supplies of edible fats, most gravely diminished by the Allied blockade, could no longer be available. When, therefore, Germany invaded Denmark, brought upon Danish agriculture the full rigours of the Allied blockade, and inflicted on herself a further diminution in her already scant supplies of edible fats, it seemed at first that this was no more than a fresh illustration of the astounding German preference for guns rather than butter.

In fact, the invasion of Denmark and Norway served much larger purposes, and played a vital rôle in a far-reaching, carefully planned, and daring offensive strategy. In the first place, the economic effects on the Allies were serious. The occupation of Denmark cut off at a stroke about a quarter of Britain's import of butter, 35 to 40 per cent. of her imported eggs, and half her supplies of imported bacon. The invasion of Norway produced even graver consequences. About 40 per cent. of Britain's imported iron ore, though drawn from the great ore-fields in northern Sweden, was shipped from Narvik. This, too, was immediately cut off; and since the iron and steel industry in all countries is

organized not to smelt "iron ore" as such, but to handle specific kinds of ore with particular metallurgical and chemical qualities, the disturbance and dislocation of industrial practice thus involved (even though the lost Swedish supplies could be replaced from elsewhere) created complex and difficult problems. Again, calcium carbide, another material absolutely vital for war, came largely from Norway; and the two-thirds of British imports which Norway had supplied had also to be replaced from other sources.

In addition to these and other direct blows at Allied supplies, the German occupation of Norway and Denmark had still further economic effects of a very serious character. Germany's new position on the Norwegian and Danish coasts meant the practically complete cessation of all Allied trade with Scandinavia for the duration of the war. Taking all the countries affected together, the trade turnover thus lost to Britain was valued at some £150 to £200 millions, of which about two-thirds represented imports and one-third exports. Besides the foodstuffs and raw materials already referred to, the Baltic area as a whole also supplied Britain with much of her paper, most of her paper-making materials, and a large proportion of her timber. And although these, like the other commodities lost to the Allies, could be replaced from other sources, the difficulties of readjustment, the longer sea distances to be covered, and the problems of shipping space, convoy, and finance to be solved, meant that the economic war which the Allies had previously been waging against Germany was carried right into the middle of their own camp.

If on the economic side the German invasion of Denmark and Norway was thus a shrewd offensive stroke, in terms of the larger strategy of the war as a whole the step was indeed far-sighted and audacious. Its importance from the German standpoint is stated clearly, and forcefully, in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* of April 21st.

"The would-be strategist must among other things possess a map, a pair of compasses, and a ruler. The southern end of Norway lies geographically in about the same latitude as the north of Scotland. This end of Norway is some 300 miles from the German North Sea coast, and some 800 miles, as the crow flies, from Narvik. From the north of Scotland to Narvik is about 1,000 miles, a distance equal to that between the Island of Sylt and Naples. This lengthy route is flanked by the bulge of southern Norway, with Stavanger and Bergen facing Great Britain and separated from Scapa Flow by a mere 250 miles. Norway and Sweden hang down from the Arctic towards Germany like a sack,

forming together a very large area indeed. In the Norwegian part live only some 2½ million people, most of them in the warmer south, which our troops had to occupy. Here, too, lie the runways which provide us with a jumping-off ground against England and the wide reaches of the North Sea. In a life-and-death struggle with Great Britain, was it really a gigantic mistake (as the English maintain) to take possession of this jumping-off ground instead of leaving it, together with the whole of Scandinavia and all its strategic and economic advantages, to the enemy?

"No. The German Supreme Command knew perfectly well what they were about. Only one thing matters now; to keep what has been gained and use it to the best advantage. We shall not fail to do this. The English are now automatically bound to leave us the first fruits of our success—the economic advantages which flow from it, the power continuously to absorb and weaken British and French air and naval forces, the power to compel Britain to fight. This wound is bleeding already and will continue to bleed. Sooner or later the weakening of the Western Powers will make itself felt—in the North Sea as well as in other waters where the British and French are most vitally interested, and notably in the Mediterranean. For the naval superiority of the Western Powers does not depend on the total size of their fleets, but on the margin of superiority which those fleets possess over other Powers. The greater the losses, the smaller the margin that remains. . . . Nowadays the connexion between the North Sea and the Mediterranean is nowhere more strongly emphasized than in Italy. When the Scandinavian drama began a fortnight ago, many people in Britain and France sensed that it might prove a critical and by no means happy turning-point in the fortunes of the Western Powers; and this instinctive judgment was right."

Whether these sinister and menacing prophecies were to prove right in the ultimate outcome could not be foretold when the Norwegian invasion began. Strategy and military power alone, however successful in single stages of great conflicts, do not always win final victory when strong and resolute peoples are fighting for freedom and life itself. But the *Frankfurter Zeitung's* analysis is nevertheless important as evidence of Germany's real intentions when she launched her attack on her Scandinavian neighbours. To what extent her French and British foes realized, even in the highest circles, the true and far-reaching import of the German plans cannot at present be ascertained. All that was clear at the time, and as late as July 1940, was the single but significant fact that the Allied *riposte* in Norway, when it came to be made, did not

testify either in scale or planning to proper comprehension of the danger that threatened or the magnitude of Allied measures which were essential to avert it.

The German occupation of Denmark was easy and all but bloodless. Even if the Danes had intended to defend themselves, the flat land frontier in Jutland offered few natural facilities for defence. But Denmark never had any serious intention of resisting. Her armed forces were trifling; and her Government and people hoped that the advantages to Germany of the food supplies which Denmark could only produce so long as feeding-stuffs and fertilizers from abroad permitted her agriculture to be maintained—coupled with the obvious inoffensiveness of a nation almost wholly without modern weapons, defensive or offensive—would secure her harmless independence.

German strategical needs shattered that modest hope. Early on the morning of April 9th—a clear, brilliant day—German planes soared over Copenhagen and German troops entered Denmark at half a dozen points. In Jutland German armoured divisions and motorized units crossed the frontier at Tonder and Flensburg and advanced towards Esbjerg, the North Sea port which is the peace-time terminus of the crossing from Harwich, and towards Aabenraa on the Little Belt, the narrow seaway which flows between Jutland and the island of Funen. At dawn other German forces landed on Funen at Middelfart and occupied the bridge there. German naval forces entered the Great Belt, the seaway between the Danish islands of Funen and Zeeland, and landed troops at Nyborg and Korsør, the ports on Funen and Zeeland respectively, between which ply the ferries that cross the Great Belt. Another armoured detachment and further troops, brought by ferry from Warnemünde to Gedser on the Danish island of Falster, marched northwards, occupying *en route* at Vordingborg the bridge between the islands of Zeeland and Falster. Further troops landed at Copenhagen and seized the fortress and wireless station. By eight o'clock in the morning the whole city, according to the German High Command communiqué, was in German hands.

The invasion was not quite bloodless, nor was force wholly unnecessary. In Copenhagen the Germans dynamited the gates of the citadel, and at the Amalienborg Palace, where King Christian was in residence, the guards offered resistance for a time. One was killed and two others injured before the King came out and ordered fire to cease. Later in

the morning, when the Danish Government and King Christian accepted under protest the terms which Germany forced upon them, the light of Denmark was extinguished until such time as an Allied victory should enable it to be rekindled.

Germany's invasion of Norway was a far more strenuous affair. Its successful execution, after making full allowance for German military skill and capacity, was primarily due to the feeble opposition which was all that the exiguous Norwegian forces could offer, to the inadequacy of subsequent Allied support, to immense German preponderance in modern weapons, and, above all, to Germany's almost complete local mastery of the air. But the critical initial stages, without which the entire affair must have met from the outset with resistance that boded ill for the invaders, turned to Germany's advantage owing to a combination of betrayal, treachery, perfidy, and deception almost without parallel in the entire history of warfare.

Norway, though two-fifths again as large as Great Britain, has a population just under 3 millions as compared with Britain's 47 millions. These small numbers are due to the very small area of fertile agricultural land—situated almost entirely in the southern half of the country between Trondheim, Oslo, and the Naze—and to the small scale of her mining and industrial activities. Half a dozen cities, of which Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, and Stavanger are the chief, contain about a fifth of the total population. These cities command the main transport routes in the few valleys of southern Norway, Oslo's strategic situation being particularly important.

The same Tuesday, April 9th, 1940, that saw the German invasion of Denmark witnessed the seizure by other German forces of five principal centres in southern Norway—Oslo, Kristiansand, Stavanger, Bergen, and Trondheim—as well as Narvik, the now famous Norwegian iron-ore port some 450 miles north of Trondheim. The German assertion that this act of violence was the German reply to the mining of Allied waters the day before was, of course, both false and absurd. As Mr. Neville Chamberlain, the then Prime Minister of Great Britain, pointed out in the House of Commons that same afternoon,

“so elaborate an operation, involving simultaneous landings at a number of ports by troops accompanied by naval forces, requires planning long in advance, and the information which is now coming

to hand clearly indicates that it was not only planned but was already in operation before the mines were laid in Norwegian waters."

Mr. Chamberlain did not enlarge upon this statement, and some days therefore passed before true details of the German *coup* reached the outside world. It then appeared from well-informed newspaper accounts that the first German move was actually made on March 24th, when German merchant vessels and German trawlers which normally plied within Norwegian coastal waters received orders to take on board all the German soldiers and military supplies that they could conceal below decks. By the night of April 4th, when German naval vessels and troopships laden with further units of the German expeditionary force began to leave German ports, it is reliably asserted that scores of German merchantmen were well under way far along the Norwegian coast.

Even these crafty and unscrupulous military preliminaries would certainly have encountered serious Norwegian opposition had they stood alone. In fact, they were supported by, and formed part of, a complex political plot which betrayed Norway from within and delivered her keypoints and securest strongholds to the enemy. The full story of the perfidy which lay behind this dastardly betrayal is not yet (July 1940) known to the world. Its central figure was a certain Major Quisling—a Norwegian officer and former Cabinet Minister whose name at once became a by-word and synonym for treachery throughout the world—the leader of the Norwegian pro-Nazi Party called the Samling, whom his German overlords vested for a time with headship of the puppet Government they set up when they seized Norway. A number of highly placed and equally contemptible Norwegian officials were associated with Quisling. Precisely what bribery and corruption, what blackmail, what promises of future power and importance led these men along the ignoble path that ended in the betrayal of their country, are not known. Only the results of their traitorous deeds became almost immediately apparent.

Narvik was taken during the night by about a hundred German soldiers who had been lying in the harbour for several days in a trawler and an iron-ore ship; and for this easy capture the treachery of the Norwegian officer commanding Narvik's defences is reported to be responsible. At Bergen, a British eyewitness stated on his return to England that the telephone lines to the two fortresses outside the city were cut during the night, that a mine belt outside the harbour had



MAJOR VIDKUN QUISLING
NORWEGIAN NAZI LEADER

been made useless by tampering with its electrical controls, and that small parties of German soldiers landed at the quay without opposition from the Norwegian troops or from a Norwegian officers' training corps stationed in the city. Their easy success led a couple of German soldiers to boast afterwards of certain facts significant of the way in which German deception had accompanied Norwegian treachery. These men, it appeared, had been on board three ships in Bergen harbour for no less than three weeks before the blow fell; and their vessels carried, not the German flag, but Swedish colours in one case and Finnish colours in the two others.

At Oslo the plot was even more far-reaching, the German methods yet more audacious and astute. The approach to Oslo from the sea is commanded by Horten and Drobak. Horten, the great Norwegian naval base, lies some forty miles south of Oslo, on the western side of Oslo Fjord. Opposite Drobak, some twenty miles south of Oslo and on the eastern side, the narrows of the fjord had been mined by the Norwegians. About 1.30 on the morning of the fatal Tuesday, April 9th, the officer commanding three Norwegian warships at Horten received an urgent and imperative message, which purported to come from Dr. Koht, the Norwegian Foreign Minister, ordering the Norwegian vessels not to fight against German warships then on their way up the fjord, and instructing the commander to put all his men ashore without their arms. At the same time the electric controls of the mines at Drobak were disconnected—by a person or persons unknown.

The presence of one vessel at Horten that morning was unknown to the plotters. This was the *Olav Tryggvason*, a Norwegian mine-layer, which had unexpectedly put in for repairs the night before. The *Olav Tryggvason*, together with the fortress of Oskarsborg on the narrows just north of Drobak, won honourable fame by offering courageous opposition to the German ships which penetrated Oslo Fjord soon afterwards. But treachery had made the volume of Norwegian resistance insufficient for the task in hand; and soon after German troops transported by air had landed at Fornebu, the airport of Oslo, other German troops conveyed by sea were setting foot in the capital itself.

All that Tuesday the number of Germans in Oslo was trifling. An experienced neutral observer estimated the total at only some 1,500 men; and even a later estimate did not raise it to 3,000. These small numbers no doubt resulted, not from any underestimate in the original German plan, but from the losses of troop transports and supply ships *en route*.

Another disconcerting fact was the sinking by the fort at Oskarsborg of the German cruiser *Bluecher*, which was carrying the officers and staff in command of the invading forces. But despite these adverse developments, that so tiny a force could occupy a capital city of 300,000 people, and hold it during the critical succeeding days while 20,000 reinforcements poured in from Germany, was due to the daring and psychological astuteness shown by the invaders no less than to the practically complete temporary default of local Norwegian leadership.

The Germans at first did everything possible to minimize and delude the population of Oslo about the real meaning of their presence. On the fatal Tuesday afternoon a German column did, it is true, march along the main streets of the city, their column actually escorted by Norwegian policemen. A crowd of 20,000 or 30,000 Osloans, fully half men of military age, watched the invaders as though they were some novel but in no way alarming spectacle. On this first afternoon no ordinary Norwegian in the crowd seems to have displayed understanding of what had really happened—let alone resentment or a show of resistance. The Germans took great care to prolong this mood of bewilderment. On the Wednesday and the Thursday a German military band gave a concert in one of the city's main parks; and the Norwegians gathered round to hear the strains of "Roll out the Barrel," and to watch. Another group of German soldiers sang songs to an accordion accompaniment from open windows in the buildings of the Norwegian Parliament itself; small German marching columns and tiny bodies of German troops by the windows of other buildings also regaled—and bemused—the Osloans with song; and it was apparently not until the Thursday afternoon, two full days later, before widespread understanding awakened in Norwegian breasts or before realization of the measure of their peril became general. What, meanwhile, had been happening to the leaders of Norwegian life and opinion—not all of whom could either have betrayed their country or fled from the capital—was completely unknown to the outside world three months later. Only the staggering fact remained that Oslo had been lost to Norway without the firing of a single shot in its streets by the unholy combination of Norwegian treachery, German audacity and cunning—and a twelve-piece German military band.

When Oslo and the other ports had been occupied, the military problem facing the Germans was to seize the country's few main transport routes, to consolidate their mastery of the principal centres, and to overcome all important opposition before the Norwegians recovered from the effects

of treachery and surprise or the Allies could send serious reinforcements. Norwegians and Allies confronted precisely the converse problem—by some means and any means to delay the Germans so that the local strategic situation did not become hopeless before strong reinforcements were brought up. The advantage on the German side, and the difficulty from the Allied standpoint, was that the Germans not merely knew what they wanted, but that they also had prepared a fully detailed plan and were assembling forces in ample strength to achieve it. Norwegians and Allies, on the other hand, began with all the disadvantages of betrayal and surprise; had to work with resources far too feeble at the start; and, whether or not they possessed a plan of campaign that had been adequately thought out—for which the scanty evidence published at the time furnishes no very certain presumption—could, in fact, do little more than oppose the Germans where opposition was possible.

So far as the Norwegians were concerned, the causes of this situation lay partly in their peace-loving practice and unaggressive intentions. A second cause was the widespread disease of extremist political and social discontent, which led, among other results, to the formation of Major Quisling's pro-Nazi Party, the Samling, and to the deliberate organization of treachery, and which enabled Quisling, during a period when he was Norwegian Minister of War, to make appointments of men no doubt favourable to himself and his schemes, whom the forces of national health and independence apparently did not later replace by loyal patriots. A further cause was the fact that, under the shelter of British sea power, Norway had been able since her separation from Sweden in 1905 to enjoy the benefits of political freedom without bearing the full burden of its maintenance and defence.

The extent to which the influence of sea power has been qualified by the development of military aviation is a highly complex and controversial question to which no final answer can be given. The subject lies, moreover, outside the scope of the present chapter. But the belated discovery by the Allies, and in particular by Great Britain, that, in the specific circumstances of Norwegian waters at the time, sea power could no longer exert its former influence unless supported by local mastery of the air such as neither Norway nor the Allies could then command, was undoubtedly one of the causes of the ultimate failure of the joint Norwegian and Allied campaign. When the Germans invaded Norway, the Allies apparently believed that German troops and supplies in sufficient volume could not be transported by air, and also that the Allies

could block the narrow waters of the Kattegat and the Skagerrak against their conveyance by sea. The event belied both expectations. The Germans did transport a very substantial volume of troops by air; and as regards the problem at sea, the words of Mr. Winston Churchill, speaking as First Lord of the Admiralty with the full authority of responsible naval opinion behind him, are conclusive. In the debate in the House of Commons on May 8th, 1940, Mr. Churchill said:

“Our present naval preponderance, it is said, ought to make it feasible for us to dominate the Skagerrak with surface ships and thus cut the communications with Oslo from the first moment and continuously. But the immense enemy air strength which can be brought to bear upon our patrolling craft has made this method far too costly to be adopted. It could only be enforced by maintaining a standing surface patrol, and a patrol, mark you, not of destroyers, because it is close to the enemy air bases and it is also close to their cruisers and their battle cruisers of which they still retain two. Consequently, very important forces would have to be employed in order to maintain a steady surface patrol, and the losses which would be inflicted upon that patrol from the air would, undoubtedly, very soon constitute a naval disaster.”

But the Germans had no intention of merely leaving problematic changes in the influence of sea power to work themselves out. The Nazi High Command was determined at the very least to create the maximum difficulty for Norway's defenders and Allies, and if possible to carry out their schemes in full, however stern the opposition they might ultimately meet. Even while a German military band and soldiers' choruses were distracting the attention of the inhabitants of Oslo and cloaking the arrival of reinforcements, German troops were advancing beyond the capital, as well as in other areas where they had gained a foothold. Their first action took place north-east of Oslo, where a small force of a couple of hundred Germans tried to capture the Norwegian Cabinet and Parliament; and the next few days saw repeated attempts—in which a serious and significant feature was the betrayal of information by Norwegian spies in German pay or control—to seize or bomb King Haakon, the Norwegian Crown Prince, and other high officers of state who were focal points in the resistance which loyal Norwegians were offering. Simultaneously, other German forces were advancing along the railways and roads which led east and south-east to the Swedish frontier, and west and south-west towards Kristiansand, Stavanger, and Bergen.



KING HAAKON OF NORWAY

Though these movements were of great importance since they strengthened the German hold throughout southern Norway, the critical strategic problem was to effect a junction between the invading forces at Oslo and those at Trondheim. The key to this problem lay in the two great valleys, the Gudbrandsdal and the Oesterdal, which run approximately north and south, are roughly parallel to one another and to the Swedish frontier, and contain the main transport routes between the two cities. Once the connexion between Oslo and Trondheim was established, arms reaching out from them and from the other centres in central and southern Norway which the Germans had seized would hold the country as in a vice. Accordingly, the very day after their landing, the Germans began to drive their way up these two key valleys. The Norwegians opposed the German advance with such small forces belonging to their tiny peace-time army of some 50,000 men as remained loyal, armed, and capable of resistance.

At first German progress was comparatively slow. The sinking of the *Bluecher* with the German commanding officers and staff, and the heavy toll which British naval forces levied on transport and supply ships, threw the original German plan slightly out of its stride and enforced a certain delay while fresh contingents of troops and supplies were being ferried over by sea and air. The interval was used by the Norwegians to reorganize and by the Allies to transport and land the first units of an expeditionary force.

British aid was promised to Norway on April 9th, the day of the German invasion. Speaking in the House of Commons that afternoon, the Prime Minister, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, announced that "His Majesty's Government have decided forthwith to extend their full aid to Norway and have intimated that they will fight the war in full association with [the Norwegian Government]." At Narvik, in northern Norway, British naval action was immediate and effective at sea, and on land placed the Germans in a position the difficulties of which were substantial and permanent. In southern Norway assistance by sea from Allied surface vessels—and hence the transport of Allied troops—was extremely difficult for the reasons given by Mr. Churchill. There remained the Trondheim district in central Norway, where, in the early stages of the invasion, the strategic possibilities of helping the Norwegians and seriously impeding the Germans were considerable.

Three means existed for sending Allied support via the Trondheim area. The first was a direct landing at Trondheim itself—an enterprise

involving joint operations by sea, air, and land forces. The other two were diversionary landings at Namsos and Aandalsnes, two small fishing ports respectively about 80 miles north and 110 miles south of Trondheim—though these distances, measured as the crow flies, were substantially greater by road or rail, owing to the extensive detours enforced by the mountainous character of the countryside.

Originally, the plan prepared jointly by the British naval, army, and air staffs contemplated landings at all three places. At Namsos, north of Trondheim, British naval forces, in fact, landed on April 14th, and British troops on April 16th to 18th; while a contingent of *Chasseurs Alpins*, the famous French mountain troops, followed a couple of days after. South of Trondheim, a British naval party landed at Aandalsnes on April 17th, and British troops arrived on the two succeeding days.

With the two diversionary landings at Namsos and Aandalsnes thus successfully carried out, the projected combined operation by naval, military, and air forces at Trondheim remained. Originally this enterprise was timed for April 20th; but in the end the plan was abandoned altogether. The precise sequence of events which led the British authorities in London to take this decision is not yet wholly clear. Piecing together the statements made in the House of Commons on May 8th, 1940, by Mr. Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, it appears that on or about April 17th, the Namsos and Aandalsnes landings were thought to have made good progress, and—in Mr. Churchill's words—"it seemed much easier to capture Trondheim by this method than to incur the heavy cost of direct attack"; while by April 25th or 26th, when it became clear that the Allied Expeditionary Force had encountered grave difficulties and was in serious danger of destruction, a direct attack on Trondheim was too late.

In these parlous and deplorable developments the strategic geography of the countryside around Trondheim played an important part. South of Trondheim the Gudbrandsdal, the more westerly of the two great valleys which link Trondheim with Oslo, debouches into flatter country near Dombaas. Trondheim, Aandalsnes, and Dombaas form the three corners of a rough and irregular triangle. Between Trondheim and Aandalsnes no direct connexion by main road or by rail exists. Dombaas itself is an important junction. Approaching it from the south along the Gudbrandsdal are the main railway and road routes from Oslo. From Dombaas north-westwards along the short leg of the triangle run road and rail connexions for a distance of some sixty miles to the sea at

Aandalsnes. From Dombaas along the long leg of the triangle the main Oslo road and rail routes continue in a north-easterly direction for a further 100 miles to their terminus at Trondheim. About thirty miles south of Trondheim the Gudbrandsdal-Dombaas-Trondheim route is joined at Stören by the other great valley-route from the south, the Oesterdal, which runs between the Gudbrandsdal and the Swedish frontier. Farther south between Stören and Dombaas, though there are no other railway links between the Gudbrandsdal and the Oesterdal lines, two minor roads run over the mountains and afford surface vehicles a difficult but passable connexion between the two valleys.

Such is the strategic geography south of Trondheim. North of Trondheim, the critical position is Stenkjer, some sixty miles north-east of the city, lying at a point where the Trondheim-Namsos road and railway touches the shore of Trondheim Fjord at a place known as the Inderøy peninsula. Stenkjer itself lies as the crow flies a mere thirty-five miles due south of Namsos; but although a secondary road only forty miles long follows closely this direct north-south line between the two towns, the great U-shaped sweep of the local valleys increases the distance by the main rail and road route to 125 miles.

When British and French forces landed at Namsos and Aandalsnes between April 14th and 20th, the Germans at Trondheim were not very numerous and the Norwegians were still fighting a fair distance to the south in both the Gudbrandsdal and the Oesterdal. The strategic task before the three Allies thus appeared feasible. The Norwegians had to check the German advance up the two valleys—whether by fighting or by demolitions which blocked the way for motorized vehicles. From Aandalsnes the Allies had to move south, occupy the strategic junction at Dombaas, reinforce the Norwegians in the Gudbrandsdal, and prevent a German sortie from Trondheim, which might take the Allies in the rear. Meanwhile, the British and French forces at Namsos could also move south and west with the object of investing the Germans at Trondheim.

Unfortunately, things did not develop according to plan. The Germans moved first against the threat to Trondheim from the north. On April 21st they raided Stenkjer from the air and landed troops from a destroyer at the Inderøy peninsula. Sharp fighting during the next two or three days ended on April 24th with the Germans in command of Stenkjer, the Inderøy peninsula, and the road and rail routes from Namsos to Trondheim.

Farther south, neither the Allies nor the Germans had meanwhile

been idle. Immediately on landing, British troops from Aandalsnes were rushed down the Gudbrandsdal, reached Lillehammer some sixty miles south of Dombaas and 120 miles south of Aandalsnes on April 22nd, made contact with the enemy there, and were thrown back in heavy fighting in the neighbourhood during the next four days. Despite these reverses, the campaign would still not have been lost had the Norwegians been able to hold the Germans in the Oesterdal or to block effectively the narrow mountain passes between that valley and the Dombaas-Trondheim road south of Stören. But to hold the Germans proved beyond the power of the small Norwegian forces available; while to effect the massive demolitions which would have closed the by-roads through the passes was a task for which the Norwegians were neither equipped nor, apparently, trained.

On April 27th and 28th the German thrust up the Oesterdal sent out motorized elements which crossed the mountains and attacked the Dombaas-Stören road. On the 30th the German advance up the Gudbrandsdal took Dombaas and established contact at Stören with the forces thrusting up the Oesterdal and with German troops in Trondheim. Before the overwhelming threat which was developing, the Allies had no choice but to withdraw their troops or leave them to certain destruction. Withdrawal was decided upon. At Aandalsnes it was apparently effected on May 1st; and the port fell into German hands the day after. At Namsos the last units were not removed until the early morning of May 3rd. On the same date the Norwegian commander in the Trondheim sector, finding that he possessed ammunition sufficient for only one more day's fighting, decided to ask for an armistice; and so the Germans, after a struggle which—though at times and in places intense—had lasted for only three weeks and four days, were left in possession of the whole of Norway south of Trondheim.

In Norway north of Trondheim, the Germans were not yet victors. Small Norwegian forces continued a courageous, though necessarily minor, resistance over part of the long tract of barren, mountainous, and almost unpopulated land that lies between Trondheim and Narvik 400 miles farther north. In and around Narvik itself Allied forces, which first landed after naval actions on April 10th and 13th and were later largely reinforced, pursued a long, not unsuccessful campaign against the Germans. Distance and bad communications—between Narvik and Namsos no railway exists—created difficulties of reinforcement and supply which the Germans at the time did not take great trouble to overcome.

Command of the seas lessened these difficulties for the Allies, and should ultimately have brought them success. But despite the strategic importance of Narvik as the exit port for Swedish iron ore during the winter months, at this stage of the war victory was not to be won by cutting off German supplies along this particular route. The Narvik campaign therefore remained a side-show—and a minor side-show at that. In June, therefore, when developments in the great Battle for France created an imperious demand for every available reinforcement, the Allies withdrew their troops, Norwegian resistance ceased, and the German conquest of Norway was complete.

On May 7th and 8th, 1940, the House of Commons debated the Norwegian campaign and the general conduct of the Allied war against Germany. Even at this early date the main causes of the Allied defeat in Norway were clear in outline—though the allocation of responsibilities and the inner history of Staff and Cabinet decisions had naturally not then been disclosed.

The Germans enjoyed, first, the great advantages of surprise, and the initiative which followed from surprise. Whether the Allies were to blame for being thus taken unawares; whether their information service was inadequate because long-standing refusal to spend sufficient money made it impossible to gather vital political and military knowledge in advance; or whether the necessary material for judgment was supplied and those responsible refused to understand and act upon it—these are questions which cannot be answered until documents still to be published have disclosed their secrets.

No similar doubts cloak other more immediate causes of failure. The Allies sent too few troops; these troops were not properly equipped; above all, they lacked proper support from the air. By about May 8th, 1940, the Germans, as Mr. Churchill informed the House of Commons, already had over 120,000 men operating in central and southern Norway. The Allied forces in the same area numbered 12,000. The British troops who formed the great bulk of this tiny total fought with their usual dauntless courage. Had they been equipped for armoured and motorized warfare, they might conceivably have stemmed the German flood. In fact, not merely were the odds against them overwhelming, but armoured vehicles and sufficient field, anti-tank, and anti-aircraft artillery were also lacking. The first anguishing reports of this deplorable situation reached the British public during the April fighting. They came from a

neutral eyewitness with an outstanding reputation for accuracy and truthfulness. Despite immediate official denials and assurances that all was well, this observer's testimony was more than confirmed by the statements of British soldiers themselves when they returned from Norway—not to mention the crushing judgment on this vital question provided by later and yet more devastating experiences in France and Flanders.

But the decisive immediate cause of Allied failure was weakness in the air. The German attack in Norway, like the German attack in Poland, the Low Countries, and France, and the Russian attack in Finland, involved combined operations on land and in the air. Once the Germans had seized the principal Norwegian air-fields, the Allies might engage in bombing raids with long-range machines, but they were unable to obtain land bases suitable for the short-range fighters which alone could keep German bombers at bay. Great efforts to redress this situation were made. A group of British fighters tried, for example (as is related more fully in the air chapter in this volume), to use a frozen lake as a landing-ground. But incessant German bombing soon broke up the ice; and with the failure of this expedient, no other suitable areas could be found in time on Norway's mountainous terrain. Soon afterwards, German local mastery of the air drove home the terribly destructive onslaught which German tanks and German guns were pressing forward on land.

Still other causes of failure may well have existed. Officially unconfirmed, but apparently well-founded, stories about the general organization of the Allied Expeditionary Force reflect, if true, no credit on those responsible.

Total disaster in Norway was avoided only because there, as on many other fields made unsuccessful for similar reasons, British soldiers, as always in their history, proved themselves once again to be the finest fighters in the world, men who might be locally and temporarily defeated, but who could not be permanently beaten. Yet however well deserved the praise they won for stubbornness, gallantry, resource, and courage, however far removed from blame were those who actually fought and suffered, the hard fact remained that the enterprise on which they were sent failed utterly to achieve its purpose. In the larger strategy of the war the Germans had won a great and important success. Whether in the end it would help to accomplish that destruction of Britain on which Hitler and the Third Reich had set their heart remained a question whose answer the British people awaited with reasonable confidence and absolute

fortitude—and with the unshakable determination to make favourable to themselves.

3. FROM THE INVASION OF THE LOW COUNTRIES TO THE EVACUATION OF DUNKIRK

Throughout the winter and spring of 1939-40 many attempts were made in Allied countries to forecast the direction and timing of the next German move. Germany retained the initiative during these months; and a wide choice of action was open to her. She had, first, to decide between a passive and an active strategy; and then, if she chose the latter, to pick the theatre of war where she would open operations.

Those who merely look back to the immense and terrible successes won by German arms between the invasion of the Low Countries and Luxemburg on May 10th, 1940, and the signing of the Franco-German armistice on June 22nd, only six weeks and two days later, may imagine that no choice really existed, that an aggressive strategy aimed at the West was pre-ordained, and that all speculation about other possibilities was the mere trifling of idle fancy. But for contemporaries in Allied countries who lived through this period of fateful perplexity and tried to fathom the springs of German policy, no such certainty existed. Even the Allied Governments were not sure until the blow fell whether, or when, or where, Germany would strike. As late as May 2nd, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, based his justification of the limited forces which the Allies had sent to Norway, and of the Allied withdrawal which was even then in train, in part on uncertainty as to German intentions. We are not going to be trapped, Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons that day,

“into such a dispersal of our forces as would leave us dangerously weak at the vital centre.

“We know that our enemy hold a central position. They have immense forces always mounted ready for attack, and the attack can be launched with lightning rapidity in any one of many fields. We know that they are prepared, and would not scruple, to invade Holland, or Belgium, or both. Or it may be that their savage hordes will be hurled against their innocent neighbours in the south-east of Europe. They might well do more than one of these things in preparation for an attempt at a large-scale attack on the Western Front or even a lightning swoop on this country.”

And for these reasons, Mr. Chamberlain concluded, we in Great Britain

"must not so disperse or tie up our forces as to weaken our freedom of action in the vital emergencies which may at any moment arise."

Five days later, in the great debate which resulted in the fall of his Government, Mr. Chamberlain repeated this argument in a more compressed form. "Germany," he reminded the House of Commons on May 7th,

"with her vast and well-equipped armies, is so placed that she can at any moment attack any one or a number of different points. We want to be ready to meet that attack wherever it may come, and the more vital the point, the more important it is that we should be ready to meet it."

Many factors contributed to the uncertainty which these sentences betray. Had a Secret Service, financially starved for many years, in fact, secured adequate knowledge of German plans? Did the far-flung network of internal espionage and the pressure of National-Socialist organization inside Germany pollute or close channels through which accurate information normally filters? Was the material gathered by the Allied Secret Services disregarded or misinterpreted by those who received it? The world, and especially the democracies on which such dire blows were showered, required answers—even if full answers could not be given while the life-and-death struggle with Germany was undecided.

In any case, the deepest causes of doubt lay elsewhere. During the winter of 1939-40 there were many good reasons why a passive strategy should appear to promise Germany a cheap and bloodless victory. Once the Polish campaign was over, no significant fighting between Germany and the Allies took place on land until the invasion of Norway. The pace of Allied armament was not markedly accelerated. The Allies seemed, indeed, to believe that they could win the war without great military effort mainly through the exhaustion of Germany by economic blockade. Complacency, arrogance, and self-satisfaction characterized many official Allied utterances. Drive, energy, and determination, though avowed in words, were not notably visible in deeds. Time and wealth were claimed as inalienable and all-powerful friends—without recognition of the fact that Time serves those alone who use it to advantage; or that total resources are irrelevant unless forged into

weapons which can beat back the foe at the critical hour and place. Meanwhile, the civil population, exhorted to sacrifice, but unwarned about the real if invisible perils of the situation, suffered a thousand pinpricks and irritations from black-out, economic disturbance, rising prices, higher taxes, and sheer boredom.

Had this state of affairs continued unchanged for another six or nine months, the possibility was by no means negligible that the Allied peoples might have yielded to the siren voices which at every seasonable and unseasonable opportunity urged—for the most part in private—the conclusion of a “reasonable” peace. Perhaps Herr Hitler never intended to grasp this alternative even had it offered. But, however this may be, the critical fact from the standpoint of those in Allied and neutral countries who were trying at the time to assess the course of Allied and of German policy is that, so long as this possibility of a negotiated peace lasted, Germany was not *compelled* to choose an active strategy as the means to victory.

In the outcome, events took a very different course. More active spirits in the Allied countries were deeply disturbed by the do-nothing policy which officially prevailed. Their discontent grew daily with their sense of growing danger. By degrees their efforts to spread understanding of the true position succeeded. The tide of popular dissatisfaction rose; and as its waters gathered, it became clear that, sooner or later, the activists in Britain and France were bound to win the day. Once this development was assured—and the extreme political flair which marked the German Chancellor’s career from its earliest days could not have left him long in doubt—German policy, if indeed it had ever entered upon the passive path, was bound to move towards increasing activity.

Even then, however, it was not clear in the Allied countries which of the main choices offered by an active strategy Germany would seize. An advance against the Low Countries, for example, would clearly improve her strategic position for the future. But it would also cut her off economically from resources which in the long run she could ill afford to lose. A move south-east might strengthen her reserves of wheat and oil—but the disturbance caused might also reduce production and would certainly be disagreeable to Russia, with whom her association was loose and unstable, as well as to Italy, whom stronger bonds bound to her side. A violent and concentrated onslaught in the west might overthrow both her main enemies and bring quick and final victory. But if this tremendous effort failed, Germany might well be left in no condition to

carry on a long war. Heavy losses would weaken her Army. Vital materials—notably oil—would be in short supply. The morale of her people would be stricken. The outcome, instead of success, might be disaster.

Looking back on these questions with the experience and knowledge of early July 1940, it is plain that Germany decided on the major Western offensive because she rightly appraised the material and political weaknesses of her foes in relation to her own military strength. But looking forward even in April and early May 1940, few, if any, even among the most acute and best-informed minds which the great British and French democracies entrusted with their affairs at that critical hour, can have forecast the ratio of armed and social forces so adversely. The ultimate causes of this Allied misjudgment lie deep in the economic, social, political, military, and spiritual history of Britain and France. They cannot be traced here even to their nearest roots. But the misjudgment—and still more the causes which underlay it—enabled Germany to add to her already enormous military power the immense advantage of psychological shock and surprise.

The element of surprise did not come into play when Germany attacked Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg simultaneously on the morning of Friday, May 10th, 1940. *That* development had long been foreseen as possible, and indeed likely. Only the choice of the west as against the south-east and the timing of the blow were uncertain. Surprise came later, as the volume, power, and direction of the German attack disclosed themselves. What was experienced on that Friday morning was confusion as unheralded blows fell on localities not fully prepared to meet them, astonishment at the variety of German weapons and methods of attack, and disorganization in the countries so suddenly plunged into the violence of total war.

The German invasion of Holland began before dawn, when large numbers of German aeroplanes crossed the frontier and attacked the principal Dutch aerodromes. At the same time air attacks were made on a number of Dutch cities; parachutists and troops transported by air were landed; and German columns advanced on land at various points along the frontier.

In the first stages the fiercest struggle seems to have taken place around The Hague and at Rotterdam. During the morning of May 10th two Junkers bombers were brought down in the centre of The Hague.

Their occupants included soldiers equipped with folding bicycles. All were killed ; and according to a Dutch communiqué issued on May 11th, an attempt to capture the police headquarters was also a failure.

At Rotterdam the Germans were more successful. Shortly before five o'clock in the morning of May 10th, a number of Dornier flying-boats alighted on the River Maas in the centre of the city, near the great girder-bridges which carry the road and railway across the river. Other German aircraft landed simultaneously on the Waalhaven aerodrome. The troops thus brought by air were at once reinforced by others which emerged from river barges where they had been hidden, and by numbers of German residents who had assembled on the Noordereiland, the island in the Maas across which the bridges run. The headquarters of these resident Germans seem to have been in the offices of the Rhea Company, a large German tug-boat concern. Throughout Friday, May 10th, these forces were reinforced by troops landed from aircraft at the Waalhaven aerodrome at the rate of some 500 an hour—until an R.A.F. raid during the afternoon put the landing facilities there partly out of action.

The German invaders seized the Maas bridges immediately on arrival, without encountering resistance. Parties then advanced from the Noordereiland and the two bridges, occupied the south bank of the Maas, and obtained a footing on the north bank. During Friday night they advanced farther into the business district, and occupied the Maas railway station lying to the east. On Saturday, May 11th, the Germans apparently hoped to capture the administrative centre of Rotterdam ; but the Dutch foresaw the danger and barricaded the main streets. During the Saturday morning sniping broke out in the city. Two heavy machine-guns in a house at the head of the Coolsingel, Rotterdam's main thoroughfare, began to enfilade it. Shells from a Dutch anti-tank gun silenced them. As Saturday afternoon drew on, the Dutch reduced all the houses on the north bank of the Maas in which snipers had secured a footing. By the late afternoon they had won the upper hand, and had even silenced the Germans on the Noordereiland. But the Germans were still not overcome. They fired the *Statendam*, the second largest ship of the Holland-America line, and many positions which they were unable to hold. On Saturday night tremendous fires raged throughout the Old Town of Rotterdam. On Sunday and Monday the Dutch continued to make progress and had reduced all resistance on the right bank of the river. The Germans, however, still occupied much of the left bank,

as well as the bridge which connected it with Noordereiland ; and on Monday their aircraft counter-attacked with bombs.

But the fate of Rotterdam was not finally determined by the gallantry of its defenders. The strategists who prepared the German plan of campaign had devised two other strokes that in the end proved fatal. One was the capture of the Moerdyk bridges south of the city ; the other was a turning movement from the Dutch south-eastern frontier.

The road and railway connexions between Rotterdam and the south pass through Dordrecht, cross the waterway known as the Hollandsch Diep (which forms the southernmost channel of the River Maas) over two bridges each one and a quarter miles long just north of the small town of Moerdyk, and then turn south-west towards the Belgian frontier and Antwerp. These bridges, which provide one of the main links between northern and southern Holland, lie on the only route along which Allied help could reach Rotterdam from the south.

The Germans captured the Moerdyk bridges by typically treacherous methods. Parachute troops disguised in Dutch uniforms approached and opened conversation in Dutch with the guards. Suddenly some of the disguised Germans covered the Dutch soldiers with their guns, while others threw hand-grenades into the adjoining guard-houses. The explosions of the grenades gave a signal to German troops concealed below deck in a number of cargo ships flying neutral flags which were moored near by. Hatches were flung open and hundreds of Germans poured out, armed with machine-guns and mortars. They deployed and consolidated the positions their disguised comrades had taken.

Meanwhile, the main German forces were advancing elsewhere in efforts to breach or turn the Dutch defences. The protection of Holland against attack from the east and south has for centuries confronted its inhabitants with a well-nigh insoluble problem. Natural obstacles are few. Only the waterways provide means for blocking the invaders. In time of peace the Dutch wage a ceaseless but successful struggle against the sea. When threatened by human foes, they are accustomed to reverse rôles and turn to the sea as an ally. Such was their intention on this occasion. A small and comparatively weak country plainly could not hold the 300-mile Dutch-German frontier against large-scale armoured attack. Concrete pill-boxes and defence posts had, it is true, been erected in increasing numbers as the Nazi menace grew ; and the frontier guards had also been suitably strengthened. But the real purpose which these defences served was to delay the invader while areas farther

back were flooded and a barrier of water and mud was prepared which armoured vehicles could not cross.

At first this general scheme of defence appeared to succeed. On Friday, May 10th, there was fighting at many places along the frontier, beginning at Delfzyl in the extreme north. At Arnhem, a strategic centre which commands central and northern Holland, the Germans reached but did not cross the Yssel, the river behind which the main northern water defences lay. At Venlo, in the southern province of Limburg, a German armoured train was blown up when the Dutch destroyed an important railway bridge. Next day the position still seemed not unsatisfactory. German troops penetrated as far as Groningen in the north, and towards Almelo and Hengelo, two towns east of the Yssel some fifty miles south of Groningen; but the main defences still seemed secure.

Unfortunately, the real danger was yet to come. Failure to destroy the bridge at Arnhem—whether through treachery or some other cause—opened the way for German troops through the water defences of central Holland. Had it stood alone, even this blow might not have proved final. The fatal stroke came from the south, where the main German armoured forces burst across the Belgo-Dutch frontier, and turned west and north. One of these German columns took the Dutch defences in the rear, so as to close on the right arm of the German pincer movement proceeding from the Almelo-Hengelo area southwards. The other column struck north-west towards the Moerdyk bridges and Rotterdam. On Monday, May 13th, the Dutch Army communiqué announced that this second column had advanced along the Langstraat, a string of villages lying on the south bank of the Maas, had reached the Moerdyk bridges, and had crossed the Hollandsch Diep moving northwards. German sources the same day claimed that strong motorized forces had effected a junction by land with the German troops previously landed around Rotterdam, and that the Dutch fortification line had been outflanked.

The 13th of May was also notable for another reason. On that day the Queen of the Netherlands reached England. Queen Wilhelmina left Holland in accordance with the advice of the Dutch Cabinet, which recommended her departure in view of the fact that the Germans were closing in round The Hague with the object of capturing her. Princess Juliana, her husband, Prince Bernhard, and their children also reached England earlier the same day.

On the following day, Tuesday, May 14th, the main Dutch forces

laid down their arms. The decision to surrender was taken in the afternoon on the authority of General Winkelman, the Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch forces. The reasons were given in statements issued by the official Dutch wireless and the Netherlands Legation in London. German troops, the Legation pointed out, had succeeded in crossing the Moerdijk bridges in great numbers and in retaking Rotterdam.

“Consequently the heart of the country was laid open to the enemy, and the main forces of the Army behind the Dutch waterline were threatened by immediate enemy attacks on their rear. Under these circumstances and in order to avoid complete destruction of the country, the Commander-in-Chief [General Winkelman] was of the opinion that further resistance had become useless and therefore was to be abandoned.”

In a broadcast on the evening of May 14th General Winkelman added that Utrecht and other Dutch cities were threatened with “the sad experience of total war”—in other words, with merciless systematic bombing such as had reduced large parts of Rotterdam to rubble and ashes.

But although the main Dutch forces in Holland had laid down their arms—small forces in Zeeland and on the islands of Walcheren and North and South Beveland continued the struggle for a few days—the Dutch Government did not surrender, and, as the communiqué issued on May 14th by the Netherlands Legation in London announced, “the state of war between the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Germany continues to exist.” This continuation of hostilities meant that the small but powerful Dutch fleet was able to join the Allied fleets, and that the vast, wealthy, and strategically important Dutch colonies in the East Indies—as well as the much smaller, but economically and strategically valuable West Indian Colonies—remained at war, and therefore could not be claimed by Germany or by any Power to whom Germany might offer the rights with which complete Dutch capitulation would have vested her. In the larger strategy of the war Allied, and especially British, command of the seas remained the mainstay of ultimate Allied victory; and the continuation of Dutch sovereignty over the Netherlands Colonial empire helped to keep command of the seas in Allied hands.

Last, but by no means least, were the moral effects of the decision of the Dutch Government to continue “the state of war.” This decision was equivalent to admitting the *fact* of German domination through

physical force, while denying its *legality*. The decision was important, not merely because it conferred the status of combatants on Dutch subjects who carried on the struggle. By denying in effect that might makes right, it also provided a moral rallying-point for Dutchmen everywhere who were determined to resist until the common cause was victorious.

The overrunning of Holland by Germany had taken only four and a half days. Dutch weaknesses, military and strategical, novel German weapons, and great German strength were responsible for this swift defeat. The Dutch troops showed great bravery and staunchness. Their casualties were stated to have reached a quarter of their total strength of 400,000. But their numbers were too small, and their Army had far too few anti-aircraft guns and tanks. The air force was also too small; and the sudden German attack destroyed many Dutch aeroplanes on the ground.

But Dutch military weakness was perhaps less important than the impossible strategic position of Holland—which will be considered below—and the new means of attack which German concentration on war devised during seven years of National-Socialist rule. These novel instruments of war were both political and military.

In Holland, as in Norway earlier and in Belgium and France a little later, the chief political instrument of total war was the so-called Fifth Column. Fifth Columnists, in plain English, were traitors when Dutch, and spies or enemy agents when German. Their number was large. In Amsterdam alone over 900 persons were arrested for Fifth Column activities. More perplexing is the variety of social classes and types from which Fifth Columnists were drawn, and the motives that inspired them. Those arrested in Amsterdam included Communist and Fascist members of the Town Council. Some Fifth Columnists were Dutchmen, willing tools of Germany in so far as vanity, unsatisfied ambition, long-cherished grudges, scores against authority not paid off, or hope of power, wealth, and esteem moved them. Other unwilling Fifth Columnists were forced into treachery by blackmail. Yet others were mere greedy mercenaries, to be bought by the bribes of whoever would pay—or pay the most. Many Germans resident in Holland turned out to be spies and hostile agents in the land where they lived and worked. In their case, one motivating factor was the astonishing susceptibility of Germans to group pressure. Blackmail and threats to relatives still in Germany brought others to heel. The restless ambition to establish German

overlordship and achieve German aggrandisement which seems inherent in many Germans enlisted the aid of others.

A couple of examples of Fifth Column work shows how dangerous and destructive it was. The two heavy machine-guns which enfiladed the Coolsingel were manned, not by Germans, but by Dutch National-Socialists, who did not hesitate to shoot down their own compatriots in cold blood. And it was a German banker (to whom the Dutch Foreign Minister referred in an interview) who had enjoyed Dutch hospitality for more than twenty years in whose pocket when arrested was found an almost complete plan of the Dutch inundation system.

The moral scourgings of society from whom Fifth Columnists were recruited, whether Germans whose hypertrophied patriotism destroyed their moral standards, or mercenaries, or mere weaklings, or malcontents whose dissatisfaction made them the natural raw material of revolution, are normally unable to find any large-scale outlet for their intrinsically anti-social activities. The Third Reich changed all that. Nazi Germany saw that such men and women, whatever their motives, could be useful to Nazi plans by weakening morale and breaking down a nation's defences from within. Large sums of money and a substantial German organization were therefore deliberately devoted to fomenting Fifth Column activity and to fostering espionage and incipient rebellion against established authority in the countries against which Germany planned to wage total war. For if war, as Clausewitz stated, is only policy pursued by other means, and if the goal of policy is German hegemony and aggrandisement, then weapons such as these may be cheaper and are not less valuable than army corps, tanks, and bombs.

Parachutists, who speedily won world-wide ill-fame, constituted another novel German weapon. Some parachutists wore recognized German uniforms and belonged to strictly military formations. Others were disguised. On the very day of the German invasion, it was authoritatively stated that about 200 parachutists wearing British uniforms had descended on the airport at The Hague. Others landed in Dutch uniforms. Yet others were disguised in Dutch civilian dress—as peasants; as policemen, postmen, or even dustmen; as butchers' and bakers' lads complete with baskets covered with white cloths (but containing hand-grenades or ammunition instead of bread or meat); as women; and—most notorious of all—actually as clergymen. These disguised parachutists had various functions, many as yet not clearly understood—apart from the obvious one of causing the greatest possible confusion and doing the

maximum damage. They made contact at once with Fifth Columnists and spies already in Holland. And all the parachutists, disguised or in proper German uniforms, aroused the most intense anger among patriotic civilians, whose fury drove them to acts as desperate as the formation in The Hague of an anti-parachute corps armed only with butchers' knives with which to attack men equipped with the most modern weapons.

Greater military interest, and high military importance, attaches to the uniformed parachutists, who had most important duties to perform, often in co-operation with other air-borne troops landed from troop-carriers. The arms and equipment of these men—who may perhaps be called "regular" parachutists—had been thought out to the last detail; and their training was arduous and thorough. The uniform consisted of a grey-green gabardine overall worn over the tunic and trousers, and fastened down the front with a zip fastener. Every man's equipment included a revolver, two haversacks, a water-bottle, a gas mask, and a rolled bivouac cape. During the jump as little as possible was carried. Weapons were dropped separately in cylindrical or hexagonal containers. They included machine pistols for one man in every five, rifles, grenades mounted on sticks, anti-tank rifles, and machine-guns. Cartridges were carried in belts, bandoliers, or haversacks.

The planes that conveyed parachutists carried up to thirty at a time. Twelve could be dropped in ten seconds. Since they usually leaped at a low altitude—about 300 feet above ground—using parachutes specially designed to open quickly, their time in the air was short, and considerable accuracy in landing was attained. When they arrived, they split at once into groups of six or eight to carry out the tasks assigned to them.

The co-operation of parachute troops with soldiers brought by troop-carriers was worked out in great detail. Both forces used the air merely for transport, and their real duties comprised the strictly military functions of surprise, the seizure of strong points, attack from the rear, and disorganization. How effectively this work was done may be seen from the description by Signor Tomaselli, the Correspondent in Germany of the *Corriere della Sera*, of the capture of the aerodrome at Rotterdam. A squadron of German planes flew over the site, which, Signor Tomaselli states, had been carefully studied beforehand. Parachutists were landed about two miles away. At the end of ten minutes a troop of about a hundred well-armed men were marching in formation towards the air-field. At the same time the troop-carriers bombed and machine-gunned the landing-ground. The aerodrome was seized, and its capture reported

by wireless from the plane of the officer in command. Another squadron of troop-carriers soon arrived and landed on the airfield. Within half an hour some eight hundred men were ready to carry on the attack on Rotterdam, already described.

The Germans gained obvious advantages of confusion and surprise from these novel political and military instruments of total war. Even more important as a factor in Holland's swift defeat was the country's strategic situation, the natural weakness of which was increased by political causes.

A physical map of north-western Europe shows that Holland lies in a rough quadrilateral of flat, low-lying land running approximately from the south-west to the north-east, where it joins the great north European plain. On the west the quadrilateral skirts the English Channel, the Straits of Dover, and the North Sea. The valley of the Somme forms a rough limit in the south-west. In the north-east the limits are the line of the Meuse (Maas) from Liège northwards, and the Yssel. To the south-east the valleys of the Sambre and the Meuse between Namur and Liège form its boundaries. The northern sector of this quadrilateral is, of course, Holland. The central sector is Belgium west of the Meuse. The southern sector comprises the French Departments of the Somme, the Pas-de-Calais, and the Nord.

Within this quadrilateral of Holland, Flanders, and north-western France the invader from the north-east finds few natural obstacles. There are some small patches of rising ground or occasional low ridges and hills which influence military operations; but the defender must place his main reliance on the rivers of the region—the Yssel in the north; the Waal (the main branch of the Lower Rhine) and the Maas (or Meuse) in the north-centre; the Scheldt, with its confluent streams—the Dyle, the Dendre, and the Lys—in the centre; the Somme in the south.

South-east of this quadrilateral of the Low Countries and northern France lies country of a very different character. Between the valley of the Meuse from Namur southwards and the valley of the Moselle farther east lies a heart-shaped triangle of land, its tip pointing to the south and its broad, northern base running eastwards from Namur and Liège on the Meuse to the Rhine near Bonn. This triangle contains high plateaux and many steep and wooded hills. Its rivers are few. Known as the Eifel in the east and the Ardennes in the west, it extends westwards across the Meuse valley almost as far as the upper reaches of the

Oise. The Eifel is German ; the Ardennes lie partly in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, partly in eastern Belgium, and partly in France, where they gradually merge into the uplands of Champagne. In striking contrast to the flat quadrilateral of the Low Countries and northern France which almost invites invasion, the heart-shaped triangle of the Ardennes is strongly defended by Nature ; so that whereas the defence of the northern quadrilateral presents even more natural than political problems, the defence of the Ardennes triangle, made easy by Nature, involves solely political problems of a complex character.

Both the natural and the political problems in the strategy of attack on the West had long been studied as a whole by the German General Staff, the greatest organ of thorough and concentrated military enquiry the world has ever known. Equally comprehensive study of the problems and organization of defence had never been made by the threatened countries of the West. Political division and reliance on neutrality, fear of the dreadful consequences if a fierce neighbour was irritated, and hope of evading somehow the scope of his plans, prevented the thorough-going military union of Holland, Belgium, and France in which alone there could have been sufficient defensive strength. In 1914 this narrowly national attitude had saved Holland from being overwhelmed by the German flood. Whether German respect for neutrality and fear of world opinion would have sufficed even in 1914 to keep German troops off Dutch soil may be doubted. Probably the solid advantages to Germany of a lung in the west through which she could draw from overseas much-needed supplies, otherwise barred to her, threw the decisive weight into the scales. But even in 1914 the doctrine of neutrality had not saved Belgium or Luxemburg ; nor was either neutrality, or economic advantages which Germany would not need *if the war could be made a short one*, to save even Holland in 1940.

The importance of Holland in German plans against the West lay in the fact that from her territory the most dangerous strategic threat to both her neighbours to the south could be developed. A German attack had, of course, to come from the east. Compelling strategic reasons demanded that it should begin in Belgium. If Belgium could be successfully defended, whether by her own resources or with British and French support, Germany might be fatally delayed. If Holland were also overrun, then Belgium could not limit her defence to a short and potentially strong line in the east, but would have also to keep secure her long weak frontier with Holland. In Holland the German General

Staff could count on finding not merely a longer and easier line along which to attack Belgium, but also the space in which to manœuvre the masses of troops whose weight—when deployed against Belgium from the north as well as from the east—could reasonably be relied on to break Belgian and Allied resistance if the smaller German numbers which could operate along Belgium's short eastern line of defence should prove insufficient alone. Once Belgium was overrun in her turn, France also would be threatened, not at a few points, but all along her frontier with Belgium—a distance of some 300 miles.

Despite this plain strategic threat, Belgium and Holland did not plan together the essential measure of common defence. After the German menace became the overriding fact in European life, conversations did take place once or twice between the rulers of the two countries and a few of their ministers; but such almost casual conferences were a most inadequate substitute for full and detailed Staff plans. Yet not even the threats and warnings which followed the outbreak of war between Britain, France, Poland, and Germany in September 1939, nor the sterner lessons which Denmark and Norway taught in April 1940, roused the Governments and peoples of the Low Countries to their real peril. German diplomacy played its part in preventing the common organization of Dutch and Belgian defence by mixing hypocritical assurances of respect for strict neutrality with treacherous promises of benevolence if the Low Countries followed a course Germany approved, and with downright menaces if they proved recalcitrant. In German eyes, recalcitrance was any policy which might strengthen these small countries and provide for their successful defence; and since fear of the consequences coupled with the forces of political and social disease which produced a Fifth Column proved stronger in critical places than common sense, foresight, courage, and resolute patriotism, nothing effective was planned or done in common to protect both countries against their mutual foe.

If the defence of Belgium against German attack depended for success to an important extent on the observance of Dutch neutrality by Germany or else on effective Dutch resistance along the German-Dutch frontier, the defence of Holland was practically impossible if German forces were able to cross Belgian territory and take the Dutch defenders in the rear. Yet in the event it was precisely this fatal threat that materialized. As we have already seen, the stroke which compelled the Dutch Army to capitulate was delivered by German armoured columns which thrust across the Belgo-Dutch south-eastern border, outflanked the Dutch pill-

boxes and frontier defences, and then swung north in the direction of Arnhem and west towards the Moerdijk and Rotterdam bridges, which were already in German hands.

The German column which struck Holland its death-blow crossed into Belgian territory at Maastricht, a Dutch town in the extreme south-west of the Dutch province of Limburg. Southern Limburg—the so-called “Limburg Appendix”—is a small strip of territory which overlaps the north-east corner of Belgium and separates it from Germany. Maastricht is a strategic centre of great importance. From the east, roads and railways converge on the city and cross the Maas by its great bridges. From Maastricht westwards, the traffic routes open out fan-wise into central Belgium and into Holland via the northern Belgian province of Limbourg. Almost due east from Maastricht, only twelve miles distant by main road, are the great German military assembly-grounds at Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). In 1914 the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II decided to respect Dutch neutrality; the German armies therefore avoided Maastricht, skirted Dutch Limburg to the south, and crossed the Meuse near Lixhe, five miles farther south. In 1940 the Hitlerian organizers of total war preferred the strategically superior crossing at Maastricht.

At Maastricht, as at Arnhem, Rotterdam, and Moerdijk, the successful capture of bridges played an important rôle in facilitating the German advance. According to a wireless statement broadcast by M. Pierlot, the Belgian Prime Minister, on Sunday evening, May 12th, the officer charged with the duty of blowing up the two bridges near Maastricht by which the Germans crossed the Maas was killed by a German bomb at the moment when he was preparing to carry out his task. Later on a Belgian officer managed to make his way to the mine chamber and by an act of outstanding heroism blew up one of the bridges and himself with it. But although this was M. Pierlot's account, the report was widespread, if not officially confirmed, that treachery—“Fifth Columnism”—was responsible for the initial failure to destroy both bridges before the Germans could use them; and it is a fact that the destruction of the second bridge was a task which fell to the Royal Air Force in one of the most courageous and most desperate actions of the war in the air.

The main line of Belgian defence in the north was the Albert Canal, which turned west from the Meuse (or Maas) just north of Maastricht and joined the Scheldt at Antwerp about sixty miles to the north-west. The Albert Canal was a formidable water obstacle, defended at the elbow

which it formed with the Maas by the new Belgian fort of Eben Emael, twelve miles north of Liège, and one of the ring of modern fortifications which had been constructed since 1918 around that city. The Belgian plan of defence was to carry out demolitions of roads, bridges, and other works east of the Meuse and the Albert Canal, and then make their stand along these two great and supposedly defensible water-lines.

The attack on Belgium, like that on Holland, began with air bombing as a substitute for a declaration of war. At about 4.30 in the morning of Friday, May 10th, hundreds of German planes raided Brussels, Antwerp, and other Belgian cities. A few minutes later German columns crossed the frontier. The Belgians carried out their demolitions as planned and retired to prearranged positions. The greatest of all German invasions of the West had begun.

Only by degrees did it become clear how many and how large were the invading forces, or what were their objectives. After the units detailed to assault Holland from the south had detached themselves, the major onslaught on northern Belgium, with which we are now concerned, set to work. The great fortress of Eben Emael was taken; the other forts of Liège were assailed (probably by another German column approaching from Verviers a little to the south) with such violence that their slopes were covered with German dead; on Saturday, May 11th, the Maastricht armies forced the passage of the Albert Canal between Maastricht and Hasselt (sixteen miles almost due west of Maastricht); and the Germans set about the advance through central Belgium which follows the practically direct line from Maastricht or Liège, through Tongres, St. Trond, Tirlemont, Louvain, and Brussels.

German progress was unexpectedly rapid. As early as Saturday morning, May 11th, German tanks and aeroplanes had attacked as far as the outskirts of Tongres, which is approachable along three good roads—from Maastricht twelve miles to the north-east; from Hasselt on the Albert Canal twelve miles to the north-west; or from Bilsen, a turning on the direct Maastricht-Hasselt road, six miles due north of Tongres. On the Saturday afternoon Belgian forces launched an unsuccessful counter-attack near Tongres; but despite this, advance German units reached Waremme, eleven miles south-west of Tongres, early on Saturday afternoon. Waremme was doubtless a German objective because the Waremme-Tongres road cuts the main Liège-St. Trond-Brussels road midway along its length, and the holders of the cross-

road could therefore prevent motor-borne reinforcements from reaching Liège.

On Monday, May 13th, French and Belgian tanks fought an engagement in the neighbourhood of St. Trond. The contest was described in Paris as the greatest battle of armoured mechanized units the world had ever seen, in which 1,500 to 2,000 tanks were engaged. Paris sources stated that the French troops fought brilliantly, and claimed that their weapons and tanks had shown a clear superiority over those of the Germans. The Belgian communiqué of Monday evening also spoke of "a brilliant engagement in the neighbourhood of the Gette." But it was ominous that these French or Belgian accounts did not allege an Allied victory in this battle; whereas the German High Command communiqué stated that their troops had reached the Grande Gette—presumably between St. Trond and Tirlemont—a claim which was tantamount to the announcement of a German success in the great tank struggle. On May 13th, German troops were reported also to have crossed the Turnhout Canal north-east of Antwerp, though it was not clear whether this crossing had been made by German forces striking north-west from Maastricht or by a detachment of the German column advancing in Holland which had moved south-west, perhaps from Eindhoven.

The German forces which crossed the Maas at Maastricht, broke through the Albert Canal and advanced to Tongres, Waremmé, St. Trond, and the Grande Gette formed only part of the tremendous mass of German troops and armoured vehicles which was moving against Belgium and France from the east. Another vast section was sweeping from Germany across Eupen, Malmédy, and the Belgian province of Luxembourg; while a third group of armies had overrun the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg and was advancing towards the southern Belgian Ardennes and the French frontier.

Few details were published at the time about the movements of what may be called the middle or Ardennes group of German armies. The Belgian communiqué issued on Saturday evening, May 11th, stated that Belgian troops operating in [Belgian] Luxembourg "continued their movements according to plan, vigorously holding up the invader." On Sunday night, May 12th, the French High command communiqué admitted "an important effort" by German forces in the Belgian Ardennes, and said that "violent encounters" had taken place. M. Pierlot, the Belgian Prime Minister, in his broadcast the same evening acknowledged the occupation of part of the province of Luxembourg.

A responsible newspaper correspondent writing the same night stated that the Germans had made their farthest advance in this area "over country scarcely defended." These statements all seem to confirm the German claim in the Sunday communiqué of the High Command that German troops had "gained ground rapidly in southern Belgium."

On Monday, May 13th, the day of the great tank battle near St. Trond, the position in the Ardennes was still obscure, though the French night communiqué admitted "a particularly important effort" by the Germans and, after French cavalry (i.e. tank) units had "fulfilled their mission to retard the enemy" and had fallen back to the Meuse, an advance by German forces along part of its course.

In this area the Meuse leaves French territory at Givet, at the tip of a narrow northward loop in the French frontier. The river flows almost due north through the Belgian province of Namur. Dinant stands on its right bank about ten miles north of Givet, and Namur is on the left bank fifteen miles north of Dinant. At Namur the Meuse makes a sharp right-hand bend and flows north-eastwards for thirty-five miles to Liège, where it turns almost due north again for the remainder of its course in Belgian territory. The gorge of the river is deeply cut; at Liège the ancient citadel stands on a height which dominates the river; and at Dinant the left bank rises steeply behind the town.

The uncertainty which obscured the situation in the Ardennes and along the Meuse on Monday had not cleared on Tuesday, May 14th, when the only information available was provided by the German High Command communiqué. This claimed that on the Liège-Namur line German forces had left the Ardennes and advanced to the Meuse between Namur and Givet. The official German News Agency added that Dinant had been reached; while the High Command communiqué asserted that German attacks on land and from the air had been made north of Namur. These attacks on the *left* bank of the Meuse must, however, have been carried out by German forces which had succeeded in forcing the river crossing at Liège or, more probably, by detachments from the German armoured column which broke through the Albert Canal defences on Saturday, May 11th, and advanced south-west during the following days. But the obscurities of the situation on the Monday and Tuesday, which at the time perplexed students and observers, if not the Allied military authorities, cleared away during the next two days, when German forces came violently into contact with British and French units in central Belgium.

Although Belgium guarded her neutrality with the utmost strictness and steadfastly refused to undertake joint Staff conversations, Britain and France foresaw clearly the likelihood of a German invasion of Belgium and the necessity of supporting her quickly. The French and British Staffs therefore worked out in great detail plans for moving British and French forces from their positions along the French frontier ; and the very morning that Germany overran Belgium from the east, the Allied arrangements for an advance from the south were set in motion. Red and white poles which marked the Belgian frontier were lifted ; tanks, armoured cars, and lorries rumbled ahead ; and the great Allied columns moved forward. The Belgian population welcomed the British Expeditionary Force with enthusiasm. Men and women gave the troops beer, hot coffee, chocolate, and cigarettes at every stopping-post. Girls thrust sprays of lilac into the hands of soldiers mounted on machines of war. Children cried shrilly and gave the "Thumbs Up !" salute familiar to their parents, then children also, during the dark days of the last German invasion.

The British Expeditionary Force's first objective was the line of the Dyle, a river which swings around Brussels in a rough semicircle some fifteen miles from the city. Wavre, south-east of Brussels, Louvain due east, and Malines due north all lie on the Dyle, which debouches into the Scheldt ten miles north-west of Malines and six miles south of Antwerp. The arc of the Dyle from Wavre to Louvain is roughly parallel to the course of the Grande Gette twelve or fifteen miles farther east, which the German columns from Liége reached on Monday, May 13th, after the great tank battle near St. Trond.

Mechanized British cavalry units seized the bridges over the Dyle at Louvain on Friday evening, May 10th, after an advance of some seventy-five miles in one day. At dawn on Saturday morning, May 11th, they groped their way forward and encountered German units about ten miles east of Louvain. The meeting indicated ominously swift German progress on the Maas-Albert Canal line. After some skirmishing, these British scouts retired to the line along the Dyle, where the arrival of infantry columns speedily brought the British forces in Belgium up to full planned strength. Strong French armies advanced concurrently with the British Expeditionary Force, some going north to relieve Holland, the others filling the area between the British right or southern flank and the French frontier.

On Wednesday, May 15th, heavy fighting broke out near Louvain,

where powerful enemy forces attacked the British Expeditionary Force along its whole front. The French communiqué that evening stated that the day's engagements had ranged from Antwerp "to the north-west of Namur," and that British, French, and Belgian troops had all been active. The German communiqué of May 15th went considerably farther. It emphasized the importance of German air attack on rearward Allied lines of communication in countering Allied attempts to block the German advance in Belgium. On land, the communiqué asserted, German motorized forces pursued retreating enemy units to the historic Napoleonic battlefield of Ligny, sixteen miles north-west of Namur and ten miles north-east of Charleroi; while other German units reached the Dyle.

The situation in the British sector—and no doubt in other sectors also—was extremely fluid. Advanced guards stretched out for miles through fertile and well-watered country. Louvain itself was quite empty of civilians by Tuesday night, when the last instalment departed towards the west. The buildings and streets of the city already bore the deadly hall-mark of war for the second time in a generation. In August 1914 the famous library of Louvain University was burnt by German action. During the years of peace, universities in America raised funds to restore it. Now the same threat from the same invaders again overshadowed its stones. Around the ancient university which a pious and learned Duke of Brabant had founded six centuries before, German bombs had destroyed an entire street. Along the main thoroughfares to the east Belgian infantrymen waited behind small barricades of paving-stones and firing positions sheltered by sandbags. On the opposite pavement Bren guns manned by British troops were also waiting.

Wednesday's struggle around Louvain continued into the morning of Thursday, May 16th. Late on Wednesday night the Germans seized a village north of Louvain on the left (or west) bank of the Dyle. Next morning a British counter-attack evicted them. At another point on the British front German forces were more successful. Under cover of darkness pontoon bridges were laid across the river and a number of German tanks advanced into British-held territory. A more important action on Thursday took place in the neighbourhood of Gembloux, where fierce fighting was in progress. Gembloux, ten miles north-west of Namur, lies on the direct Namur-Brussels road, along which, another ten miles away—and about the same distance from the Belgian capital—lay Wavre, the south-easternmost point on the Dyle position.

Despite successes around Louvain, the British position along the Dyle was far from satisfactory on Thursday night. The German units which broke through the Turnhout Canal on Monday, May 13th, doubtless formed part of the forces which, according to the French evening communiqué, attacked towards Antwerp on Wednesday, May 15th. The collapse of Holland on Tuesday, May 14th, released important forces which may well have reinforced these units. In the fighting around Louvain on Wednesday, May 15th, the German columns which had forced the Meuse at Maastricht and Liège were probably the main participants. But the struggle at Ligny and at Gembloux implied the engagement of part of the German armies which had advanced through the Ardennes and crossed the Meuse between Liège and Namur.

These armies—to whose other and yet more important activities we shall return presently—thus threatened the British Dyle position from the south. The pattern of Belgian roads from Namur via Ligny and Gembloux facilitated the German tactics of infiltration by advance units thrown forward in fanlike formation. The use by the Germans of new types of exceptionally large tanks whose armour, though doubtless penetrable by heavier artillery, presented special problems to anti-tank weapons, increased the risk that the British right (or southern) flank might be turned. German success in this manoeuvre would have cut the British Expeditionary Force off from Brussels and endangered its lines of communication back to northern France and the Channel ports. Although the British divisions had fought well and successfully around Louvain, and, with the aid of their large artillery park, could probably have held their positions in face of a frontal attack, the threatened outflanking thrust from the south made a strategic realignment necessary.

Early on the morning of Friday, May 17th, Lord Gort, the British Commander-in-Chief, therefore ordered his army to retire to new positions west of Brussels. The movement was carried out swiftly but calmly, and with the ease that unimpeded motor transport permits. Lorries conveyed the troops and supplies. Tractors hauled guns from their positions. Rearguards covered the withdrawal. Low-flying British aircraft successfully kept enemy reconnaissance machines at bay. The completion of the movement was announced by a War Office communiqué issued on Friday night, which pointed out that the "readjustment was carried out without interference" and emphasized that there was "no question of any collapse or break-through in this [British Dyle] sector," as the Germans were suggesting.

The British withdrawal left the way clear for the Germans to advance. Late on Friday afternoon, May 17th, German troops marched into Brussels, which the Belgian Government had left earlier for Ostend. The official German News Agency also claimed that Louvain had been occupied—as was natural after the British retired; that Malines, an important railway junction fifteen miles north-west of Louvain, had been captured; and that the German right wing “advancing from the north”—in other words, using no doubt divisions drawn from Holland—had pushed right up to Antwerp.

Great as were these operations which the northern and central groups of German armies were carrying out in Holland and in north and central Belgium, the operations of the central and southern groups of armies in south Belgium and Luxemburg were greater and more fateful still. Here operations began in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, the short stubby wedge of land whose frontiers skirt Germany in the east, France in the south, and Belgium in the west, and whose landscape merges the steep hills and wooded valleys of the Ardennes with the uplands of Lorraine.

To overrun the tiny Grand Duchy, whose entire population numbered only some 300,000, demanded neither military strength nor skill. Yet even here Germany dispensed with the formality of declaring war and paved her way with the same infiltration of Fifth Columnists and soldiers in disguise as were notorious elsewhere. In Luxemburg the cloak of civilian dress was worn both by parachutists who were landed near the French frontier and by so-called “tourists.” About 2,000 of the latter entered the country shortly before the invasion, hid their arms, and wandered about wearing knapsacks. When hostilities started on Friday, May 10th, these forces, armed with sub-machine guns, felled trees across the roads and took other steps to prevent the inhabitants from escaping into France. They also formed nests of resistance and fired from woods and houses on French detachments which, when the German invasion became known, began to move across the frontier to defend critical positions in the Grand Duchy. Indeed, so sudden and so complete was the German surprise that even the Grand Duchess Charlotte and her family succeeded in eluding the invaders by only twenty minutes, and reached France in safety thanks largely to the skill and determination of the chauffeur driving her car.

Few details about the fighting in Luxemburg had been published by July 1940, but the communiqués issued at the time made it clear

that the struggle there was extremely short. The German communiqué of Sunday, May 12th, asserted that the whole of the Grand Duchy was in German hands. The French Sunday night communiqué stated that fighting had started again on the southern Luxembourg frontier—and also that the enemy was attacking French advance positions farther south, between the Forest of Warndt and the Saar. The German communiqué of Monday, May 13th, contained no reference to Luxembourg, though it claimed a forward movement and the capture of prisoners south of Saarbrücken—i.e. in the Forest of Warndt-Saar sector. The French Monday night communiqué claimed to have repulsed these attacks, to have thrown back attempted German advances a little farther north near the Moselle (which in the south forms the eastern frontier of the Grand Duchy), and to have repelled heavy German pressure on Longwy, a town in front of the Maginot Line proper just inside the French border at the south-west of the Luxembourg frontier.

By Tuesday, May 14th, fighting was in progress along the whole of the French north-eastern frontier from Longwy in the west to Wissembourg in eastern Alsace near the corner where the French frontier joins the Rhine and turns south along the river. At the same time the German armies which had advanced westwards through the Grand Duchy had reached the area in Belgian Luxembourg and the Ardennes where they could join the central group of German armies (which had entered Belgium farther north) in a combined onslaught on the French frontier. Developments already reported in the Luxembourg-Ardennes area ought, indeed, to have warned the French High Command how fateful the Germans meant the action to be to which they were preliminary. Subsequent events proved that the onslaught in this sector was the decisive manoeuvre in the northern French campaign. But the importance of the German attacks around Longwy and between the Moselle and the Rhine must not be underestimated. These attacks were made in substantial force; and though in the end they proved to be a blind, they served at the time to distract the French High Command and, perhaps, to confuse it as to the area where the major onslaught would be made and as to the significance of the movements preliminary to it.

The great German thrust followed immediately. As early as Tuesday, May 14th, the German communiqué stated that German forces had reached the Meuse along the Belgian portion of the river between Namur and Givet, had pushed on to the French frontier east of Charleville-Mézières (two French towns, twenty-five or thirty miles south of

and about fifty miles south of Namur, forming one urban area and lying on the Meuse, one to the north and the other to the south of a tributary which flows into the river there), and had crossed both the French frontier in many places and also "the Meuse . . . into France." The official German News Agency added that German forces had reached Sedan. This town, the scene of Napoleon III's surrender to the Prussians in 1870, is ten or twelve miles south-east of Charleville-Mézières. It lies on the Meuse, in a hollow difficult to defend. French sources make it clear that the German advances to the Sedan area were at least partly achieved on Monday night, May 13th, or early on Tuesday, May 14th; for the French *morning* communiqué of May 14th admitted that Sedan had been evacuated, and that "particularly desperate fighting" was "taking place in its immediate vicinity as well as in the region of Dinant." The French night communiqué on Tuesday added that the French were counter-attacking at Sedan, but said that the Germans were making "a momentous effort with furious obstinacy and at the expense of heavy casualties."

Next day—Wednesday, May 15th—the French communiqué acknowledged that the Meuse had been crossed "at several points" between Mézières and Namur, and also that the Germans had made "some progress" at Sedan. The German communiqué added the vital fact that the break-through at Sedan had pierced the north-western prolongation of the main Maginot Line which extended along the Belgian frontier from the south-west corner of Luxemburg to the sea. On Thursday, May 16th, the situation deteriorated further. The French morning communiqué stated ominously that along the sixty-mile front from Namur to Sedan "the battle has taken on the characteristics of open warfare"—for which the French, who had placed their main reliance on the static defences of the Maginot Line, were plainly not adequately prepared. Moreover, the French High Command, in "the higher interests of the conduct of operations," refused "any precise information as to the actions . . . taking place," a step which awakened the gravest misgivings. The forebodings which this communiqué aroused were in no way allayed by the vague French communiqué issued on Thursday evening, or by the comments of the French military spokesman, whose thankless official task it was to try to provide reassurances, speedily belied by facts, in an effort to make the temporary best of a bad job. Anxiety was heightened, moreover, by the very moderation of the German Thursday night communiqué, which claimed only that German

forces had repulsed French counter-attacks south-east of Sedan and had continued operations successfully on the west (or left) bank of the Meuse.

Not until Friday, May 17th, did the full extent of the German breakthrough begin to become clear. On that day the Germans widened and deepened the great front of their attack until its left flank rested at Carignan, ten miles south-east of Sedan, while its right flank had reached Maubeuge in France forty miles west of the Meuse at Dinant. Since the distance from Carignan to the Meuse was roughly twenty miles, the German front on the south actually exceeded sixty miles in breadth. The pocket or bulge was, moreover, of a substantial size; for the admission of the French night communiqué on Friday, May 17th, that the Germans were attacking "in the regions of Avesnes and of Vervins"—towns due south of Maubeuge—meant that the pocket from Maubeuge to Vervins was at least thirty miles deep.

That Friday evening General Gamelin issued an Order of the Day to the French troops.

"The fate of our country, that of our Allies, and the destiny of the world hangs upon the issue of the battle now going on.

"British, Belgian, Polish soldiers, as well as foreign volunteers, are fighting at our side. The British Air Force, like ours, is engaging itself up to the hilt.

"All troops who cannot advance must die at their posts rather than abandon the part of the national soil entrusted to them. As always in the grave moments of our history, the password today is 'conquer or die!'

"We must conquer."

In view of subsequent criticisms of the part played by the British Air Force which emanated from the Pétain Government after France's defeat, General Gamelin's tribute at the time deserves special notice.

On Saturday, May 18th, and Sunday, May 19th, the Germans deepened to the south the pocket they had opened into France and continued their drive to the west. In the southern sector the main advance was made on Sunday, when strong German units moving south-west reached the Aisne near Rethel, about twenty-five miles south-west of Mézières and a little farther south-west of Sedan. This sector front lay in broken, wooded terrain; and the speed of the advance appears to have been at least partly due to the less resistance encountered. In the west, where excellent counter-operations had been reached, the Germans made important

both on Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday the fighting took place in the region of Guise (fifteen miles west of Vervins) and Landrécies (ten miles west of Avesnes). Vervins and Avesnes had been the scene of fighting on Friday; and the German communiqué of Saturday not only claimed this substantial progress, but also alleged that armoured divisions had pierced the French frontier fortifications in this new area, "smashed" two French divisions, taken many prisoners, and secured much booty. On Sunday the advance continued. The German Sunday night communiqué claimed that their forces had crossed the Rivers Sambre (near Landrécies) and the Oise (near Guise) and stated that Le Cateau (seven miles west of Landrécies) and St. Quentin (twelve miles west of Guise) were in their hands. In fact, the German drive on Sunday seems to have gone even farther than this communiqué said, for M. Reynaud, the Prime Minister of France, told the French Senate two days later that during Sunday an armoured German division "had actually reached the line Quesnai-Cambrai-Péronne—and the Somme as far as Ham." Quesnai (or Le Quesnoy) is about sixteen miles west and a little south of Maubeuge. Cambrai is fifteen miles west by north of Le Cateau. Péronne is about twenty miles south-west of Cambrai and sixteen miles west by north of St. Quentin. Ham, which lies on a great southward bend of the Somme, is twelve miles south-west of St. Quentin. Thus this large advance of between twenty-five and forty miles in only two days had brought the Germans about eighty miles west of the Meuse at Mézières and rather more than half the distance from the Meuse to the sea.

The French and German communiqués of Monday, May 20th, announced no significant change. The French communiqués stated that heavy fighting was continuing in the St. Quentin area, where the German thrust was "still very strong." The French military spokesman admitted that the task of containing the German drive was proving difficult. The German communiqué claimed no more than an advance to "the field of the Somme battle of 1916 on the Cambrai-Péronne road."

But a much greater stroke was in preparation. Late on Monday and during Monday night large numbers of parachute troops were landed well beyond the German front. Armed with explosives and incendiary equipment, besides other weapons, they made at once for public buildings, such as town halls, police headquarters, and telephone exchanges, and for critical communications centres, such as cross-roads, railway stations and junctions, and bridges. On the ground, motor-cyclists and light armoured units followed the parachutists boldly westwards. The result,

after a day of great confusion, was the announcement to a startled world late on Tuesday, May 21st, that the important centres of Arras and Amiens had fallen into German hands, and that German advance units had actually reached the mouth of the Somme at Abbeville. Moreover, although the French night communiqué stated that only German "advance elements" had been pushed "as far as Amiens and Arras," the German High Command communiqué claimed Abbeville also; while the official German News Agency added that the advance had not been carried out only by relatively light advance units, but had been reinforced over a broad front by strong motorized units as well as infantry. Thus on Tuesday night, May 21st—a day only less fateful than the Tuesday preceding when the momentous break-through at Sedan had taken place—the Germans were only twenty miles from the French coast at Abbeville and within easy reach of the Channel Ports, which they had never attained during the Great War of 1914-18. They were not slow to consolidate their advantage.

These tremendous events naturally produced immediate and major changes in Britain and France. Mr. Neville Chamberlain resigned his office as Prime Minister on Friday evening, May 10th. The failure of the Norwegian campaign was the occasion of his fall; but a great and long-gathering ground-swell of discontent with the manner in which his Cabinet were conducting the war was its true cause. Mr. Winston Churchill replaced Mr. Chamberlain as Prime Minister on the very day of Germany's simultaneous invasion of Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg. On Thursday, May 16th, the untoward development of the campaign and the German break-through at Sedan took Mr. Churchill to France to consult with M. Reynaud, the French Premier. On Sunday, May 19th, Mr. Churchill delivered his first broadcast as Prime Minister to the British people. In a powerful, frank, and inspiring address he warned them that "it would be foolish to disguise the gravity of the hour"; but "still more foolish to lose heart or courage"; and he stated clearly and emphatically his confidence in ultimate victory.

That same Sunday saw changes in the French High Command, the necessity for which had long been apparent to close observers of the course of the war, and in the French Cabinet also. Despite his great age—he was eighty-four—Marshal Pétain, the victor of Verdun during the War of 1914-18, was appointed Vice-Premier—an appointment which the French people were to rue in sadly different circumstances before many weeks were out. M. Daladier was retired from the Ministry of

National Defence (which M. Reynaud himself took over) and allotted the less important ministry of Foreign Affairs. M. Georges Mandel, the assistant and disciple of the great Clemenceau, became Minister of the Interior, a key post where M. Mandel's proved patriotism and incorruptible strength promised good service to France. Finally, and most immediately important of all, General Gamelin was replaced by General Weygand as Chief of the General Staff of National Defence and Commander-in-Chief of all theatres of war. General Weygand was the pupil and helper of Marshal Foch, the saviour of Warsaw and Poland in 1920, the reorganizer of Syria, the head of advanced French military studies, the peace-time Commander-in-Chief, in 1931, of the French Army. He, too, was an old man; but despite his seventy-three years of active life his intelligence, energy, and powers of decision were outstanding. The appointment of Weygand brought France fresh confidence. Under his leadership, it was hoped, the German flood which had overwhelmed Gamelin would at last be stemmed.

The situation facing Weygand when he took over the supreme command was as grave, and indeed as desperate, as it could well be. After less than five days of fighting Holland had fallen completely into German hands. German forces occupied more than half of Belgium, including the capital, and the great industrial area from Charleroi to Liège. The Belgian Army, the British Expeditionary Force, and the French forces in Belgium had been driven back west of Brussels. Although the British Expeditionary Force was intact, and the bulk of the Belgian Army had been saved, the French forces had received extremely harsh handling. The French frontier fortifications had been not merely breached but overwhelmed along a sixty-mile front from Sedan to Maubeuge. The German columns had advanced eighty or ninety miles into France, were heading swiftly for the coast and threatened completely to cut off the armies of the north from the main Allied forces in the south. The great gap along the frontier had been torn open by 2,500 to 3,000 armoured vehicles—the greatest mass of concentrated but mobile steel and fire power ever seen on land. Still more were available and free to operate against the Belgian fronts. In France, vast masses of motorized troops and infantry followed behind the armoured columns, making their assault much more than the mere incursion of an exceptionally powerful cavalry raid. The defences in the invaded area of France had broken down completely. New methods had to be tried and found, new instruments discovered or old ones adapted to fresh and

most urgent demands. Tactically, the combination of low-flying air and mechanized ground attack gave the invaders the advantage of unprecedented speed. The swiftness of their movements robbed the defenders of the time needed for reorganization. A flood of civilian refugees—worn, footsore, frightened, miserable, and resourceless—hampered Allied military operations. All that remained—and it was much—was the spirit and fighting traditions of the French soldier, the skill of the French artilleryman, and vast numbers of seventy-fives, the finest field gun ever produced, which were being rushed up in thousands and fired with great effect at almost point-blank range against the huge German tanks which defied smaller weapons.

In this vast and terrible crisis General Weygand displayed at the outset the same moral courage and sense of patriotic duty as had often before served his country well. With the utmost energy he set to work to rally his forces, improve his equipment, reorganize his armies, and devise new plans.

The eastern sector of the southern German front was soon stabilized. Sedan forms the northern apex of a triangle whose base runs from Montmédy to Rethel. At Montmédy, twenty-five miles south-east of Sedan, the powerful defences of the main Maginot Line ended and the far lighter and inadequate westward extension began. The Germans attacked Montmédy on Sunday, May 19th, and Monday, May 20th. As on previous occasions, they were successfully repulsed. At Rethel, forty-five miles west of Montmédy, they were temporarily more fortunate. Their attack at Rethel on May 19th succeeded and German units managed to cross the Aisne, on which Rethel stands. During the night, however, these units, according to the French morning communiqué of May 20th, were dislodged and thrown back across the river. At Laon, thirty-five miles west of Rethel, the German advance was permanent. Laon fell into German hands on Monday, May 20th, and the swastika flag was hoisted over its citadel. The same day German units pushed on to the Oise-Aisne Canal—probably at Anizy, ten miles south-west of Laon. On Tuesday, May 20th, a further advance was made to the Chemin des Dames, the famous road which runs along a bleak ridge north of the Aisne, commands the valley, and safeguards its holders against counter-attack from across the river to the south. Here, despite continued attacks, carried out regardless of heavy losses, the German push south stopped, and during the rest of the campaign in Flanders and northern France a line running roughly from Montmédy to Rethel, the Chemin des Dames, and Anizy separated the two sides in this sector. Especially

important to the French was the fact that the Rethel-Montmédy portion held ; for had the hinge on which the French were turning been broken at Rethel, the Maginot Line would have been threatened from behind with all the grave dangers that such a strategic threat implied.

In the western sector, the line of the Somme from its mouth near Abbeville through Amiens to Péronne and Ham formed during the same period the limit of the German drive southwards. Immediately after the capture of Amiens, the Germans threw a bridgehead across the river ; and for the next ten days or fortnight the French employed themselves in strengthening their defences and cleaning up its left (or south) bank. The light German units holding the small bridgeheads were soon driven back or mopped up, and although there were numerous centres of resistance, these were reduced by degrees in many local actions. On Thursday, May 23rd, the French reached the southern outskirts of Amiens ; and on Saturday, May 25th, they reoccupied the more important half of the city, on the left bank of the river. Similar favourable developments occurred along the Aisne ; and not until the Battle of Flanders had ended and the evacuation of Dunkirk was complete were the French again seriously threatened in this area.

Meanwhile, the advance elements of the main German columns were continuing their drive to the Channel Ports. On Tuesday, May 21st, mechanized units swung north-west from Amiens and Abbeville towards St. Pol and Montreuil. St. Pol, a secondary railway junction, lies twenty-one miles west-north-west of Arras and thirty-five miles north of Amiens. Montreuil, the site of British Headquarters during the War of 1914-18, and familiar to thousands of British holiday-makers at Le Touquet and Paris-Plage, is twenty-six miles west-by-north of St. Pol and twenty miles north of Abbeville. For the Allied forces to the north, this German advance to St. Pol and Montreuil was doubly important. First, it brought them within seven miles of the sea at Etaples and within twenty-two miles of Boulogne north-north-west of Montreuil by either of two main roads. Secondly, it blocked all possible roads south from Arras. Once German units were in Boulogne and advance elements had been reinforced by mechanized forces and infantry, a strong anchorage on the coast was assured which the Allies could cut, whether from the south or from the north, only by driving their way through the German arm extending to the sea.

The German communiqué of Thursday, May 23rd, gave no details about this sector, and merely announced that German troops were

"advancing northwards in the direction of Calais." This was a severe understatement. In fact, as Mr. Churchill told the House of Commons that afternoon, "heavy fighting" was "proceeding around and in Boulogne"; and by evening the city was evacuated.

The evacuation of Boulogne was an undertaking which called for the courage, steadiness, skill in the face of danger, daring, and endurance of all three services—Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force. The Navy not only brought off the British forces by sea, but played a vital part in carrying out demolitions and holding off the Germans. The Royal Air Force kept the skies clear and allowed the enemy no more than intervals for intermittent bombing. The troops fought as long as men could, and when fighting was impossible, they endured.

Boulogne's danger was foreseen on Wednesday, May 22nd. A demolition party comprising seamen, Royal Marines, and a small detachment of Royal Engineers was therefore detailed to make the necessary preparations. On the morning of the 23rd they were rushed across the Channel in a destroyer. When they reached the harbour, German tanks and mechanized troops were advancing over the high ground to the south in the face of shell-fire from British and French destroyers at sea. But the Germans were too strong. They had already surrounded the town and from the higher points already occupied they commanded both the town and the harbour. They were massing more troops and guns. Small parties of Germans were descending the outlying streets. The whole German position made it impossible for the British to send field-guns or reinforcements; and the defenders were in too slender force to hold out indefinitely against tank attacks.

While a conference of naval and military officers was deciding on evacuation, the demolition party just landed were earmarking bridges, cranes, lockgates, power-houses, machinery, and everything else that might be of use to the enemy, and preparing their charges. The order to complete demolition was given, and the work was carried out—in the case of at least one obstreperous object, a large crane near a wet dock containing a naval trawler, with the help of a few shells from a destroyer. Although all this work was done under heavy German fire, the men engaged—many of them young men who had never been under fire before—showed typical and magnificent coolness.

In the meantime, many British troops were sheltering in the familiar sheds round the railway station. More kept arriving every minute. Two destroyers came into the harbour, drew up alongside, crammed on

board every soldier they could hold, and steamed out again stern first. Three more destroyers then came alongside. They were fired on furiously by German field-guns placed on a wooded hill north of the harbour and overlooking it, and by pom-poms and machine-guns in the second-story windows of a hotel opposite. Then several German tanks came down the hill on to the foreshore. The destroyers answered the German fire swiftly and accurately. Their guns plastered the hillside and the German artillery on it practically at point-blank range. They silenced the machine-guns and pom-poms in the hotel. Their first shot fired at a tank missed; the second, a direct hit, sent its target "spinning over and over like a child doing a cartwheel" (as an onlooker described it); the third, also a direct hit, knocked another tank out. The others retired at speed.

While this heavy firing on both sides was going on, the troops were embarking from the jetty. "Their courage and bearing," states a British eyewitness, "were magnificent. Even under a tornado of fire, with casualties occurring every second, they were as steady as though on parade." After these destroyers left—one slightly on fire and all listing heavily with the number of men on board—the many troops still ashore and coming over the bridges from the town needed all their superb coolness for hours. Darkness fell, but at ten o'clock the railway station was still crammed with men. The Germans were very close, and advancing. Then three destroyers nosed again into the harbour, packed themselves tight with troops, and groped their way once more out to sea. All of Boulogne harbour that remained for the Germans was a mass of ruins which would take months of undisturbed work to make usable again.

Fighting continued in Boulogne on Friday, May 24th, and the German High Command communiqué did not announce its fall—"after heavy encounters with enemy land and sea forces"—until Saturday, May 25th. But the Germans did not wait for the capture of Boulogne before pushing on up the coast. Military quarters in Berlin asserted on May 24th that strong contingents of German motorized troops had reached Ardres, ten miles south-east of Calais; and on May 25th the German High Command communiqué stated that Calais was surrounded.

While the Germans were breaking through to the sea and pushing north to Calais, extremely important fighting was going on elsewhere. When the British Expeditionary Force withdrew from the Dyle line in front of Brussels on Friday, May 17th, other German forces were already

advancing on Antwerp. By Saturday night, May 18th, German troops had broken through the fortifications and penetrated the inner city, and the German flag was flying over Antwerp Town Hall. The Renaissance-style buildings, including the Town Hall, and most of the hotels and commercial buildings, were still standing. But the bridge over the Scheldt had been destroyed; and the empty streets were littered with burning, shell-splintered cars, dead horses, wandering cows, scattered army equipment. Although most of the inhabitants had not fled, normal life had ceased and the city was desolate.

The first Belgian river west of Brussels is the Dendre, which flows into the Scheldt at Termonde, about fifteen miles south-west of Antwerp. On Sunday, May 19th, the Germans continued to advance. They crossed the Scheldt west of Antwerp and pushed back the enemy—in this sector the Belgians—whom their High Command communiqué of May 19th described as “fighting tenaciously.” Farther south they reached the Dendre. On Monday, May 20th, they crossed the Dendre and advanced in the southern Belgian sector to the Upper Scheldt. On Tuesday, May 21st, the German communiqué admitted that the enemy were making another stand east of Ghent, thirty-two miles south-west of Antwerp and seventeen miles west of the junction of the Dendre and the Scheldt at Termonde.

The front from Ghent approximately north-west through Bruges to the sea at Zeebrugge and Ostend was held by the Belgian Army. South of Ghent the Belgians also held the line of the Scheldt for eighteen miles to Audenarde (or Oudenarde), the scene of the great victory by Marlborough and Prince Eugene over the French under Vendôme in 1708. At Audenarde began the British line along the Scheldt (or Escaut), to which the British Expeditionary Force had retired when it withdrew west of Brussels on Friday, May 17th. The Scheldt reaches Audenarde on its northward course from France after making a great, bow-shaped curve north-west through Tournai, and then north-east again. The British position followed the Scheldt from Audenarde to Maulde, just inside the French border, where it is joined by the River Scarpe. The line of the Scarpe runs roughly west-south-west from St. Amand, four miles due south of Maulde, through Douai, seventeen miles from St. Amand, to Arras, another fifteen miles beyond Douai. Arras was the site of British G.H.Q. until active warfare began in May, and was still held by British forces after the Germans had reached the Channel coast as far as Boulogne.

From Maulde and St. Amand the Allied line curved approximately south-east through Valenciennes, seven miles distant from St. Amand. South and east of Valenciennes, the position was obscure; but on Sunday, May 19th, and for a day or two after, the front apparently followed an irregular line south-east to Le Quesnoy (nine miles from Valenciennes), and from there turned in an easterly direction towards Maubeuge (about twenty miles from Valenciennes). Mormal Wood, to the south-east, between Le Quesnoy and the River Sambre, was also occupied by Allied troops.

The forces in this sector were French. They comprised the French armies which had left the French frontier fortifications on Friday, May 10th, when the German invasion began, and, advancing into Belgium on that day and on Saturday, May 11th, had swung to the right along the line of the Meuse approximately from Namur and Dinant southwards. During the fighting at Ligny on Wednesday, May 15th—when the British Dyle line farther north was also heavily attacked—and west of the Meuse from Namur southwards to Mézières on Tuesday, May 14th, and Wednesday, May 15th, these armies faced a tremendous onslaught from German armoured divisions. On Thursday, May 16th, when the French morning communiqué stated that the struggle south of Namur had “taken on the characteristics of open warfare,” the French armies were clearly pushed back farther. By Friday, May 17th, they had retreated to Maubeuge, forty miles west of the Meuse at Dinant. During Saturday, May 18th, and Sunday, May 19th, the communiqués were silent about operations in this area. Nor is it clear exactly what French units were fighting there. A much later German communiqué (dated Saturday, May 25th) refers to “parts of the First, Seventh, and Ninth French Armies.” What is clear is that these French armies had been badly mauled by the German columns they encountered. And a British official statement issued after the final capitulation of France also shows that, whatever French forces may have held or been driven back to the Valenciennes–Maubeuge–Mormal Wood–Le Quesnoy area, the arc from the British position at Maulde through St. Amand to Valenciennes was occupied by eight or ten divisions of the French First Army.

During the last stages of the fighting in northern France and Flanders, the Allies faced the problem of trying to reconstruct a continuous front which would reunite the armies that the Germans had cut off in the north with the main Allied forces in the south; or alternatively of saving as much of the encircled northern armies as they could. Conversely,

the German problem was to consolidate their hold on the coast and, if possible, destroy completely these northern Allied forces. In time, the Allied operations therefore fell during this final stage into two parts : the period of attempted break-through ; and the period of rearguard action and retreat to the coast. German operations, on the other hand, consisted in frustrating the attempted break-through and trying to circumvent a successful withdrawal by sea. In space, the areas of greatest importance were the front in Belgium along the Scheldt to Ghent and the sea, a key quadrilateral in northern France, and (in the final days) the Dunkirk position.

The boundaries of what is here called a key quadrilateral are marked by Lille, Valenciennes, Cambrai, and Arras. From the southern corner at Cambrai west-north-west to Arras is a distance of twenty-two miles. Lille, close to the northern border between France and Belgium, lies twenty-seven miles north-east by north of Arras. Valenciennes is twenty-eight miles south-east of Lille. From Valenciennes back to the starting-point at Cambrai, the distance is nineteen miles and the direction south-west. In shape, the quadrilateral is thus like an irregular lozenge, whose two longer sides are approximately equal and run from Arras to Lille and from Valenciennes to Lille ; and whose two shorter sides are rather less equal, and run from Arras and Valenciennes respectively to the southern tip at Cambrai. Direct roads connect these four centres. South of the quadrilateral was the thirty-mile gap between Cambrai and the Somme at Ham through which the Germans were pouring their armoured divisions from Sunday, May 19th, onwards. The north-eastern side of the quadrilateral between Lille and Valenciennes flanked the position on the Scheldt to which the British Expeditionary Force retired on Friday, May 17th. Maulde, the southern point of that position, was only four miles north of St. Amand, itself seven miles north-west of Valenciennes on the direct Lille-Valenciennes road. Other centres of great importance during the fighting in this sector of the northern front lay on or near the quadrilateral.

The British forces along the Scheldt consisted of seven divisions in the line and two divisions in reserve. As the momentum of the German drive to the sea increased, the obvious danger of attack from the sea against the British rear led the British High Command to what in military language are called " stops "—a meaning on its face—with the object of delaying, if possible, the German advance and protecting both the British Expeditionary Force and the

Scheldt line and the French First Army occupying positions immediately to the south between Maulde, St. Amand, and Valenciennes.

The improvised "stops" were composed largely of elements drawn from untrained Territorial divisions, three of which had been sent to France some weeks earlier for work on aerodromes and similar activities. These Territorial divisions received some training, but they were not fighting formations. Their arms comprised rifles, some machine-guns, and a few anti-tank weapons, but did not include artillery. When thrown into battle they fought, however, with great gallantry.

The "stops" charged with delaying the German drive were placed at various points across its line of advance westwards. Around Doullens, twenty miles west-south-west of Arras, the 36th Infantry Brigade under Brigadier Roupell, V.C., was posted. The Germans later overran this brigade. A single battalion of the Royal West Kents guarded the Somme crossings at Péronne, twenty miles south-west of Cambrai. Two brigades of the 23rd Territorial Division were strung out along the Canal du Nord (which runs from the Somme at Péronne north to Douai). Other units were at Albert and Bapaume, between Arras and Péronne to the east and Doullens and Amiens to the west. The "stops" charged with protecting the British rear were placed at Arras (on the western corner of the quadrilateral) and at Douai, Lens, and Béthune. From Douai (within the quadrilateral, midway along and just west of the north-south diagonal from Lille to Cambrai) to Béthune is roughly twenty-four miles west-north-west. Lens stands about midway along the direct Douai-Béthune road, and nearly midway along the Arras-Lille road.

On Monday, May 20th, while the Germans were preparing their advance the next day to Arras, Amiens, and Abbeville—a movement which the British delaying "stops" at Albert and Bapaume were plainly too small and too lightly armed to hinder seriously—General Ironside, then Chief of the Imperial General Staff, came to British G.H.Q. to discuss the position with the French Generals Billotte and Blanchard. It was clear that an effort had to be made to re-establish contact between the British Expeditionary Force and the French First Army in the north and the French forces on the Somme in the south. It was also clear that the substantial German forces already occupying the gap made a mere unhindered southward march impossible. An attack was necessary and was decided upon.

On May 20th the two divisions which formed the British Expeditionary Force reserve in the northern sector were the 5th and the 50th. These

forces were to attack from Arras southwards across the River Scarpe. Elements of the British First (Mechanized) Cavalry Corps were to support the attack on its right (or west) flank ; and part of the French First Army were to co-operate on the British left (or east) flank.

The attack was to start at 2 o'clock on Tuesday, May 21st. That morning, however, word was brought to British Headquarters that the French division would not be ready until the next day. But time was pressing ; the longer the gap was left, the more Germans kept pouring into it ; and Lord Gort, the British Commander-in-Chief, therefore decided that it was unwise to wait and that the attack by the British units must proceed as planned.

At first all went fairly well. The attacking forces consisted of the British 5th and 50th Divisions, with the strongest available tank support. These forces reached their first objective south of Arras, inflicted heavy casualties on the Germans, and took many prisoners. But by this time German infantry had been brought up into the gap to support the advanced German armoured divisions. During the next two days the struggle was severe, especially in front of Arras. The German tactics consisted in manœuvring round to the west, so as to surround the British forces and Arras itself. By the evening of Thursday, May 23rd, the German out-flanking movement was almost complete, and Lord Gort decided that the British troops must be withdrawn.

During the final stages, the counter-attack south of Arras and the withdrawal of the 5th and 50th Divisions apparently merged with the operations involved in the defence of the city itself. Though obscurity cloaks many details, it is clear that the German communiqué exaggerated when it asserted on Tuesday, May 21st, that German columns had " taken " Arras. Much of the city was then still in British hands ; and its defence continued strenuously for another two days to come.

Arras was defended by a small and comparatively weak force. The effectives in the city consisted of a battalion of Welsh Guards ; mixed headquarters units—construction companies, supply details, and similar troops whose duties had previously been largely civilian in character and whose training and equipment were not extensive ; and a much-pounded French armoured division. At first there was little or no artillery. Later the 5th British Division lent a battery of twenty-five-pounder gun-howitzers, and the 50th British Division lent a battery of two-pounder anti-tank guns. Ammunition and food, however, were plentiful. This force was under the command of General Petre.

By this time the normal civilian population of 20,000 had fallen to 3,000, who took refuge from intense air raids in caves in the famous local quarries. Around the southern and eastern outskirts of the city strong points and machine-gun nests were hastily constructed and occupied by the defending troops. Fighting became heavy from Monday, May 20th, onwards, with dive-bombing raids reinforcing land attack. Although the Green Howards and the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers arrived as reinforcements, enemy pressure became too severe to hold the southern outskirts, and the troops were withdrawn to the line of the railway station. The bridge over the railway cutting was blown up, and across the six or seven lines in the cutting an impenetrable tank barrier was made by piling trains together four or five deep until the whole area was packed solid with smashed locomotives and rolling-stock.

On Wednesday, May 22nd, a counter-attack to relieve the intense German pressure around the town was decided on under Lord Gort's instructions. The counter-attacking force was composed of two small mobile columns formed from a brigade consisting of the Durham Light Infantry and a tank brigade, under the command of General Martell of the 50th Division, to which these units belonged. Each column consisted of an infantry battalion, an anti-tank battery, an eighteen-pounder gun battery, a machine-gun company, and a tank battalion. These columns were to clear an area about ten miles deep and four miles wide forming an arc of a circle west and south of Arras.

The counter-attack took place on Wednesday, May 22nd, and Thursday, May 23rd. At first it went well. The left-hand column, which was nearer the city, caused heavy German casualties, put many tanks out of action, and took 400 prisoners. The right-hand column was held up by unexpectedly heavy enemy forces and was fired on in error by the French armoured division co-operating with it. Gradually the tide turned. The commanders of the tank battalions and of one infantry battalion were killed. German reinforcements came up in ever-growing numbers. German pressure increased. German attempts to cross the Scarpe in assault boats continued relentlessly in the face of withering fire. After a prolonged struggle, the obvious German superiority in strength at last compelled the mobile British columns to withdraw north of the city.

General Petre's force in Arras had meanwhile been subjected to increasing attack. Dive-bombing went on hourly. Alarms at points all round the defences were almost continuous. German forces, some of

them disguised, began to appear in the area of the citadel itself. Preparations for a last stand were being discussed when finally, at 1.30 a.m. on Friday, May 24th, an exhausted liaison officer, who had been journeying by car for five hours, reached General Petre's headquarters with orders from Lord Gort to withdraw.

Only two hours of darkness remained before daybreak. The Germans were occupying at least 330 degrees out of the 360 degrees of the full circle around the beleaguered city. The only way out was to the north. At first the evacuating troops moved down the Douai road. Then it was found that the bridge over the Scarpe just outside Arras had been prematurely destroyed. This apparent misfortune proved a blessing in disguise, for a small scouting party which managed to clamber across were captured a short distance along the road by a large number of Germans. The remaining columns were shifted to the Hénin-Liétard road, which runs parallel to the Douai road farther west, and which provided the only exit not in German hands. The evacuation had taken place in perfect order; and all the morning of May 24th General Petre's force, together with portions of the counter-attacking 5th and 50th Divisions—by great good fortune neither seen nor attacked by German planes—moved north towards comparative safety.

While the defence of Arras and the British counter-attack to the south were proceeding, the French around Valenciennes were also active. On Monday, May 20th, the main German communiqué announced that "near Maubeuge and south of Valenciennes" French and Belgian forces were repulsed while trying to force their way to the south. "Heavy losses, especially in armoured units," were suffered, said the communiqué, which added that these French and Belgian forces were "retreating to the west, badly shaken." On Tuesday, May 21st, the German communiqué claimed the "first operational success" for "the greatest offensive operation of all time." The French Ninth Army, it stated, "which was to effect and maintain communications on the Meuse from Namur to Sedan between the strong [German] forces operating in Belgium and the Maginot Line [*sic* !], has been defeated and scattered." The communiqué also asserted that General Giraud, formerly commanding the French Seventh Army, whom General Weygand had just appointed Commander of the French Ninth Army, had also been captured, together with his staff. It subsequently appeared that General Giraud was taken by means of a typical German deception, for a spy dressed as a French officer ascertained his whereabouts under the pretence of having Staff

instructions to convey, and then reported back this knowledge to his German superiors. The same communiqué also stated that further French efforts to force a way out of Valenciennes had again been frustrated.

On Wednesday, May 22nd, the second day of the British counter-offensive south of Arras, the Germans attacked the French forces pressed into the Valenciennes area, and heavy fighting developed. Next day the German communiqué announced that Mormal Wood, where French troops were taking refuge, had been cleared up; and this statement suggests that much of the German effort in the Valenciennes area on May 22nd was, in fact, directed against the troops in Mormal Wood rather than against those around Valenciennes itself. Fighting still continued at Valenciennes on May 23rd; and during the night of May 23rd-24th French forces, in response to British requests, made a vigorous effort at Cambrai, the southernmost corner of the quadrilateral.

While these unsuccessful British and French counter-attacks were proceeding at Arras, Valenciennes, and Cambrai, the Allied Commanders-in-Chief were preparing further plans. Early on Wednesday, May 22nd, General Weygand had come up from Paris to the Northern Front; but he did not see Lord Gort, as a message announcing his visit went astray. During the night of May 22nd, however, a meeting between King Leopold of Belgium, Lord Gort, and General Billotte took place at Ypres. At this meeting General Billotte, Commander of the French First Army, who was entrusted with the "power of co-ordination" between the French, British, and Belgian Armies, explained General Weygand's plan for closing the gap between the armies of the north and the main French forces south of the Somme. The plan envisaged a simultaneous attack from Roye, south-west of Amiens and south of the Somme, by the French forces in that area, and by the British Expeditionary Force and the French First Army from the north. In the event, the French attack northward from Roye never materialized. The plan for operations by the British Expeditionary Force and the French First Army was, however, prepared in some detail. This plan projected an attack by two British divisions and three French divisions towards the railway at Marcoing and Havrincourt, about six miles south of Cambrai. The plan was approved from London, subject to conditions regarding a joint British and French attack from both north and south, which subsequent events made irrelevant.

The French pressed to have the northern part of this plan put into

operation on Saturday, May 25th. Lord Gort was unable to agree to this date, and proposed Sunday, May 26th, instead. Lord Gort's reasons for delay were the need to reorganize the British divisions which had been counter-attacking at Arras ; the shortage both of munitions—which at the time were limited to a single "gun-issue" of 160 rounds per gun—and of small-arms munitions ; and the inability to land munitions by parachute owing to German watchfulness. Growing pressure on food supplies, of which only two and a half days' full rations were available, also created difficulties.

In the event, the matter of dates became quite secondary ; for on May 25th developments took place in Belgium which put the possibility of French and British counter-attack to the south quite out of the question.

After capturing Antwerp on May 18th, crossing the lower Scheldt west of Antwerp on May 19th, and the Dendre on May 20th, the Germans encountered Belgian resistance east of Ghent on Tuesday, May 21st. On Wednesday, May 22nd, the German communiqué admitted that the Allies were still resisting stubbornly on the Scheldt ; but on Thursday, May 23rd, German columns found a weak place in the Allied line approximately where the British Expeditionary Force joined the Belgian Army near Audenarde, and forced a crossing. Next day—Friday, May 24th—the Germans, having clearly inflicted heavy damage on the Belgians, pressed home their advantage, broke the line of the Scheldt over a considerable distance, advanced to the line of the River Lys, and entered Ghent. As the course of the Lys runs roughly parallel to that of the Scheldt ten miles or so farther west until the rivers find their meeting-place amid the complex waterways of Ghent, it is clear that the German advance on May 24th was substantial.

While these events were taking place in the northern part of western Belgium, another development of great strategic importance occurred farther south. This was the capture of Tournai, which the Germans also stormed on Friday, May 24th. Tournai is a little Belgian city which lies on the Upper Scheldt only four or five miles from the French border. Although it is outside the critical Lille–Cambrai quadrilateral, its position eight miles north-east of the midpoint of the Lille–Valenciennes road made it a strategic key to the fortifications on the French side of the frontier.

During the next five days after the capture of Ghent and Tournai on Friday, May 24th, operations in northern France and Flanders reached a peak of complexity which must be unique in scale, speed, and violence

throughout the whole history of warfare. At this stage the Allied Armies were enclosed in a great V-shaped tongue of land. The open top of the V rested on the sea from Calais north-east along the coast to Zeebrugge, a distance of about sixty-five miles. The angle was at Valenciennes; and along the seventy-mile right-hand (or eastern) side were strung from north to south the towns of Bruges, Courtrai, and Tournai. The left-hand (or south-western) side from Valenciennes to Calais was about eighty miles long; and bulging out somewhat to the south of it were the positions still held by the Allies—Douai and Lens among them. The Germans were attacking all along both sides of the V in an endeavour to capture or annihilate the Allied Armies enclosed within it. Many German operations were going on simultaneously; in an attempt to follow their course it will, perhaps, be best to proceed from the north and east westwards.

When Tournai fell on May 24th, the way was clear for a continuation of the German attack south-westwards against the French frontier fortifications and northwards against Courtrai, sixteen miles from Tournai on the River Lys. On Saturday, May 25th, both operations were undertaken, and the German communiqué announced that evening that Courtrai had been captured. The German advance was endeavouring to push the Belgian Army in the direction of Bruges, twenty-eight miles north of Courtrai; but although fighting continued fiercely, developments during Sunday, May 26th, do not appear—if the absence of detail in the Sunday communiqués is a guide—to have yielded much immediate advantage to either side.

The German attack against the French fortifications south-west of Tournai was perhaps even fiercer than on the Belgian front. Immediately after taking Tournai on May 24th, the Germans advanced on Saturday, May 25th, along a twenty-eight-mile front from Roubaix, six miles north-east of Lille, to Valenciennes. The French military spokesman stated on Sunday morning, May 26th, that the German attacks on Saturday in this sector had been repulsed with heavy German losses. The German onslaught on Saturday was not confined, however, to the front north of Valenciennes. An attack was also made on both sides of Douai within the Lille—Cambrai quadrilateral. With the attack north-west of Douai we are not concerned for the moment. The attack north-east of Douai was, of course, also directed against the Valenciennes position; and on Sunday evening the French military spokesman claimed that this attack from the south, as well as the attack from the north—both of which had continued throughout Sunday—had again been hurled

back with enormous German losses. The French position around Valenciennes was, however, rapidly becoming untenable ; and during the night of Sunday, May 26th, to Monday, May 27th, French troops on the Scheldt line—i.e. between St. Amand and Valenciennes—were withdrawn westwards.

Throughout the next three days the fight for the quadrilateral continued to rage with terrible intensity. On Monday, May 27th, the Germans slightly extended their position along the French frontier by capturing Menin, eight miles north-west of Roubaix, the same distance south-west of Courtrai, and twelve miles north of Lille. On Tuesday, May 28th, German forces broke through the French frontier fortifications along a broad front north of Valenciennes, crossed the Scheldt west of the city, and captured Orchies, fifteen miles north-west, and Douai, twenty miles west, of Valenciennes. These advances brought all but the northern, Lille, corner of the quadrilateral into German hands. On Wednesday, May 29th, this corner fell also, when German forces advancing from both west and east captured Lille, the great textile city and the most important road and railway centre in northern France.

The German forces which advanced on Lille from the west formed part of the German columns which attacked the left (or south-west) side of the great Allied V from the final British withdrawal from Arras onwards. On the very Friday, May 24th, during the morning of which the British column under General Petre marched out of Arras along the Hénin-Liétard road, the Germans captured the heights of Notre Dame de Lorette north-west of the city. This ridge was the scene of much fighting during the War of 1914-18. North of it again, and separated from it by the valley of the Souchez, is the more famous ridge that bears the honoured name of Vimy. On Saturday, May 25th, Vimy Ridge also fell into German hands ; and the German communiqué that night claimed that the whole of this high ground, including the heights above Lillers, twenty miles north-west of Vimy, and St. Omer, seventeen miles north-west of Lillers, to Gravelines, eighteen miles north-west of St. Omer, was held by German forces.

At this point the German advance encountered dispositions that were a consequence of decisions taken at the Allied council of war which was held at Ypres on Wednesday, May 22nd, in very different circumstances. At that conference it was agreed that three British divisions were to be relieved by French troops, who were to take over a portion of the front on the British right, and by Belgian forces, who were to do the same on

the British left. At this time the front was on the Scheldt ; these British divisions, which had fought most of the way back from Brussels, were to be rested for a day or two before taking part in the projected southward attack which formed part of the Weygand plan. As things worked out, however, rest was not to be their lot. The German drive northwards towards Boulogne and Calais threatened the whole of the Allied rear ; and the divisions originally destined for counter-attack to the south had, in fact, to be sent at once west to St. Omer to protect the positions lying to the north.

On Sunday, May 26th, the south-western arm of the Allied V was comparatively quiet except at Calais which, according to the German evening communiqué, fell into German hands during the day after " violent fighting." This claim was denied (though mistakenly) by a French spokesman the following evening. On Monday, May 27th, the British forces which had been moved back to the St. Omer sector carried out a counter-attack. These operations—which the British Expeditionary Force communiqué reported with customary laconic reserve by stating that " British infantry counter-attacked successfully in co-operation with French tanks "—took place at Aire, a town in the valley of the Lys midway between Lillers and St. Omer. As a delaying action at a moment when the entire fate of the Allied Armies depended on time the counter-attack at Aire achieved its purpose. The Germans were unable to advance again until the following day, Tuesday, May 28th, when their communiqué claimed that German forces had thrust back the Allies in the west along the whole front, and that La Bassée, Merville, Hazebrouck, and Bourbourg were in German hands. La Bassée is twelve or fourteen miles south-west of Lille ; and the other towns thus claimed lie almost on a straight line north-west from La Bassée to the sea at Gravelines. As regards Bourbourg, there would seem to have been some exaggeration in the German report, for the water-lines which start at Gravelines and formed an essential aid in the successful evacuation of Dunkirk apparently included Bourbourg in their coverage. La Bassée and Merville, however, were clearly in the area from which the German forces that attacked Lille and entered it from the west on Wednesday, May 29th, continued their operations.

The vigour, tenacity, and discipline with which the British and French forces defended these positions, the stern determination with which they withdrew, fighting continuously and in perfect order, towards the sea at Dunkirk, are known too well to the participants in this gigantic

struggle and to their fellow-countrymen to require description or praise. Such were the deeds—"too full for sound and foam"—in this great Allied rearguard action that they won recognition, not merely from the brave if fanaticized Germans who witnessed and opposed them on the field of battle, but from the malignant perjurers in Berlin whose deliberate policy drenched the German people with venom, hatred, and lies. Even the Berlin wireless commented on the fighting at Hazebrouck and around Lille in words which from that source bore for once the unwonted stamp of sincerity and truth.

"We must recognize," Dr. Goebbels's commentator said, "that the British fighters were magnificent. Each soldier was of marvellous physique and full of fighting spirit. At Hazebrouck our soldiers had to storm each house separately. The castle took an extra day to capture, and our men found there nothing but a heap of ruins. In the Lille area the French fought magnificently. When they were at last forced to surrender because they had no more ammunition, German generals permitted them to march past with their arms and saluted them."

Nowhere was the resistance against odds more superb or the strategic consequences of gallant and tenacious defence more important than at Calais, the theatre where a terrific contest was fought to the end.

When Calais was seen to be threatened, a British detachment 3,000 strong was rushed over from England. On arrival they found 1,000 French troops, who remained by their side throughout the days that followed. The British units concerned were battalions of the Rifle Brigade, the 60th, Queen Victoria's Rifles, and the Royal Tank Regiment. Their task was made enormously more difficult and more dangerous by the fact that their second vehicle ship, carrying about three-quarters of their armoured vehicles, equipment, and ammunition, could not be unloaded and steamed out of port undischarged, bearing wounded to England.

These 4,000 men were attacked by at least two German armoured divisions, aided by dive-bombers and all the merciless weapons of air warfare. When the British troops reached Calais, German forces had already surrounded the port in such strength that the British defensive plans—hamstrung in any case by loss of the equipment which the second vehicle ship was unable to land—could not be executed in full. But the defence carried on. Despite the confusion caused by masses of refugees pouring into and out of the city, despite lack of water, equipment, ammunition, and supplies, they fought in every street, in every house, at

every corner. Step by step they were driven out of the town. At last they retired to the old Citadel, which Vauban, the greatest of all French masters of fortification, had built at the order of Cardinal Richelieu almost exactly three centuries before.

The Citadel stood to the west of the town above the docks. Although the fort had not been modernized, its walls were still strong. Deep casemates beneath turf-covered earthworks gave excellent shelter from bombing. Even when the stone ramparts were breached by the Germans, the sheer drop from their top to the ground below provided an insurmountable obstacle against tanks. While the tiny garrison was in the Citadel, squadrons of the Royal Air Force dropped water, ammunition, and hand-grenades by parachute. These supplies, which were flown over in the face of intense opposition, enabled the defence to be prolonged.

The German bombardment and attack continued without cease until on Sunday morning, May 26th, after three days of violent fighting against tremendous odds, the Germans sent a flag of truce into the city with a message demanding immediate surrender. The reply that the Commanding Officer, Brigadier Claude Nicholson, one of the outstanding officers of his age in the British Army, is reported to have made is one of the great utterances by great commanders which, like Nelson's famous order, go ringing down to history. "The answer is, 'No!'" Nicholson said: "The British Army's duty is to fight."

Brigadier Nicholson's message was followed by a renewed attack. At nine o'clock a heavy bombardment began. Dive-bombing went on almost incessantly. The British defensive position was reduced to ruins. The town was in flames. By about four o'clock in the afternoon the Germans had gained possession of the dock area and had overpowered the remnants of the Rifle Brigade, who no longer had any position to hold. The Headquarters of the Rifle Brigade, a position of the Queen Victoria Rifles, and Rear-Brigade Headquarters were captured about the same time. Meanwhile, the 60th fell slowly back towards the docks; but by six o'clock they too were surrounded. Late on Sunday night the battle was finished. Calais had fallen.

The defence of Calais was one of the most remarkable feats of arms throughout all the tremendous fighting of the Flanders campaign. Strategically, it was a successful delaying action, like the British counter-attack at Aire on Monday, May 27th. At Calais at least two German armoured divisions were contained for four days, during which their activity in the fighting farther north might have had results fatal for

the Allies. As evidence of the martial quality of its defenders, the contest at Calais was conclusive. Berlin newspapers described the struggle there as the stiffest resistance of the war. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* wrote of it as an example of "the proven tenacity of the Anglo-Saxon race"—which was true; adding that "Germany has never underestimated" this tenacity—which was untrue, even as regards the communiqués issued by the German High Command. Only thirty unwounded survivors were brought off at the time by the Royal Navy; though a month later the British public learnt the welcome news that not all of Calais's defenders had perished, and that at least some were prisoners in German hands.

The British forces sent to Calais when the city was endangered were ordered to hold it to the end. Twenty-four hundred years before, a handful of Spartans, defending Western civilization at that time against barbarian invaders from the East, were ordered by Leonidas, their general and King, to hold the pass at Thermopylæ against the Persians to the end. None survived. The Greek poet Simonides composed the inscription placed later on their tomb:

"Go tell the Spartans, thou who passest by,
That here, obedient to their word, we lie."

The brave men, British and French, who died doing their duty at Calais can have no nobler memorial.

It is now necessary to complete the picture of German operations against the Belgian Army and, in doing so, to see the immediate reasons why the Weygand plan broke down as regards the British part in the projected counter-attack southwards. The successful German attack against the Belgian forces at Courtrai on Saturday, May 25th, opened a serious threat on the British left flank. Originally, it had been hoped that a Belgian withdrawal, if necessary at all, would have taken place in a counter-clockwise or westerly direction so as to bring the Belgians back towards the Ypres Canal north-west of Courtrai. In fact, however, the Belgian Army were forced northwards towards Bruges. Although the solitary brigade which the British Expeditionary Force then had in reserve was sent to the British left flank near Ypres, it was not sufficient to hold the position. About six o'clock on Saturday afternoon Lord Gort therefore decided that the 5th and 50th Divisions, which had just been withdrawn from the counter-attack south of Arras, should go at once to

the Belgian front. Had this step not been taken, the right arm of a German pincer movement would have closed in and cut the British Expeditionary Force off from the sea.

The fighting on the Belgian front around Courtrai continued during the night of Sunday, May 26th, to Monday, May 27th. During the Monday morning the Germans continued to hurl masses of infantry, supported by strong artillery fire, against the Belgian lines. Comparatively few German tanks were used on this front, which extended for twenty-five miles, and was the scene of violent German attacks carried out with complete disregard for losses. The German effort appears to have been made in two directions: northwards, in the direction of Bruges and Ostend; and westwards, from Menin towards Ypres. In the Menin sector the German morning communiqué of Monday, May 27th, claimed that a deep salient had been made in the Allied position. The same day King Leopold of the Belgians sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command asking for a suspension of hostilities on the Belgian front.

On Tuesday, May 28th, the Germans reaped the harvest of their own tremendous efforts and of Leopold's betrayal. The main road from Courtrai to Bruges, twenty-seven miles distant, runs due north. From Menin, seven miles south-west of Courtrai, a parallel road runs due north through Roulers (eleven miles north of Menin) to Thourout (nine miles north of Roulers). At Thourout this road forks, the left fork running fourteen miles north-west to Ostend, and the right fork running twelve miles north-east to Bruges. On Tuesday the German communiqué announced that German forces had reached Thielt, a town just east of the midpoint along the Courtrai-Bruges road, and in fighting at close quarters had overcome Belgian artillery grouped there. On Tuesday evening, after what was practically an unopposed advance, German forces stood six miles from both Bruges and Thourout. More important still, the Belgian Army, under direct orders from King Leopold, had ceased to resist as from four o'clock on Tuesday morning. Thus the fighting around Thielt was carried out by Belgian officers and men who, in the confusion and anger which followed Leopold's surrender, had patriotically refused to obey his orders.

This wilful step stunned the anxious world on which it fell like a thunder-stroke. Leopold's act was the personal and unconstitutional decision of a monarch who overrode the formal and unanimous advice of his responsible Ministers. The Belgian King had certainly given his

Allies no sign or warning that his heart was faint or his resolution lacking—or alternatively that he was a schemer of unexampled perfidiousness. Not a fortnight earlier, on Thursday, May 16th, the Belgian wireless had broadcast to Colonel Modard, the hero of the defence of Liège in 1914, who with his staunch fellow-officers and men was again standing firm against German attack in the new Liège fortifications of 1940, the following message :

“ Colonel Modard, commander of the forts, officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the fortified position of Liège, resist to the end for your country. I am proud of you.

“ LEOPOLD.”

Six days earlier, on Wednesday, May 22nd, the Belgian King, conferring about future plans with Lord Gort and General Billotte, had let fall no hint which suggested that he would not stand by his comrades in arms to the end. Even at 8 p.m. on Sunday, May 26th, Leopold had betrayed no sign of the decision he must then have been turning over in his heart to the senior Belgian officer who, as liaison officer between the Belgian forces and the French northern armies, had almost daily contact with his King.

It is true that a few ominous straws suggesting that the royal wind did not always blow in the right quarter could be discerned by those who reviewed the situation afterwards, though at the time they passed unnoticed amid the hurricane of devastating events. For example, Leopold, unlike Queen Wilhelmina of Holland—whose “ flaming protest ” against the unprovoked German attack stirred every sympathetic heart—never denounced Germany or the German invasion, never broadcast a message of hope or encouragement to his own people, and never even informed them publicly that their cause was just. And it also proved highly significant—though the fact was not generally known at the time—that Leopold consistently refused to permit intimate relations with France ; forbade his Ministers, even after the outbreak of hostilities, to leave Belgium to consult with their French colleagues ; and generally cultivated the notoriously anti-French General Van Overstraeten, who was head of the Belgian Ecole Militaire and Leopold’s principal aide-de-camp.

The interaction of character, mood, and events which led to Leopold’s act of betrayal will provide biographers, psychologists, and historians with material for study for years to come. Here we can examine no

further the dark and morbid broodings of an obstinate, autocratic, and lonely man whose patriotism was unquestioned during the years of peace, however blind to reality and folly-stricken was the policy of wishful neutrality towards Germany and France alike which he initiated in October 1936—after the German invasion of the Rhineland and the denunciation of the Locarno Agreements should have taught him better.

Although the Belgian Government at once repudiated the capitulation of their King, the Belgian Army laid down their arms in accordance with instructions from their royal Commander-in-Chief ; and the main damage was done. The effects upon the Allied military position of what Mr. Churchill, referring only to the personal side of King Leopold's act, called " this pitiful episode," were immediate and violent. Early on Tuesday morning, May 28th, before the Belgian surrender, the British Expeditionary Force faced the Germans on a line extending roughly from a point near Ypres (twelve miles west-north-west of Menin and seventeen miles north-north-west of Lille) south-east towards Roubaix and Lille. Along the French frontier from Roubaix south-east to St. Amand, from St. Amand west-south-west to Douai, and thence north-west approximately towards Lens (where the Germans claimed to have repulsed counter-attacks by French Colonial troops on Monday, May 27th) and Béthune the Allied front was held by French armies—though according to one unofficial report there were also British forces on the Roubaix-St. Amand sector. Roughly at Mieppe Wood (north-west of Béthune and north-east of Aire, the scene of the British counter-attack on May 27th) the British forces took over again along a line running north-west through Hazebrouck and Cassel to the sea west of Dunkirk. From Ypres to the sea east of Dunkirk, and as far east as Roulers, Thourout, Thielt, and Bruges, the front was held by the Belgian Army.

The result of the Belgian surrender should have been a great gap on the Allied left flank from Ypres to Dixmude and the sea at Nieuport. Through this twenty-five-mile gap the Germans could then have poured, taking the British Expeditionary Force and the remaining French armies in the rear, and cutting them off from the sea. Fortunately, however, the Belgian Army was not holding its front alone. British and French reserve divisions had been sent to strengthen the Belgian line at various points ; and in the confusion which followed the Belgian surrender, these French and British forces were able to block the German onrush at critical points.

How great that confusion was, and what strange and treacherous

methods of warfare increased the difficulty of the Allied defenders, appears from an episode during a rearguard action fought by the 12th Royal Lancers at Dixmude and Nieuport on the fatal Tuesday, May 28th. This mechanized cavalry regiment on the extreme British left had orders to stop the Germans from crossing the Yser Canal, which runs from Ypres through Dixmude and Nieuport to the sea. At Dixmude an officer of this regiment was passed by a Mercédès car flying a white flag, carrying four German Staff officers, and travelling west at high speed. Later two similar cars and these German officers were seen in Nieuport. The Germans were in conversation with the Belgian Staff officers and what appeared to be French officers. One of the Mercédès cars tried to cross the Yser Canal at Dixmude on its return journey; but three of its occupants were shot. One or both of the other cars apparently were more successful and no doubt brought back news that there were no troops in the Nieuport-Dixmude area, that the bridges were intact, and that the German forces should therefore press on quickly.

The British officer of the 12th Royal Lancers at Dixmude with difficulty persuaded the Belgian officer in charge of demolition that the bridge there must be blown up. When this was attempted, it was found that the charges had been tampered with. A man dressed as a French major then appeared and told the British officer that he would take over. But the British officer became suspicious and the pseudo-French major made off. The necessary material was now brought up, and the bridge was speedily destroyed. Ten minutes later German motor-cyclists, followed by infantry in lorries, arrived along the road from Roulers south-east of Dixmude. The look of obvious surprise on their faces proved that they had expected to find the bridge in position and an easy crossing assured. This time they were disappointed, for the British forces on the opposite bank of the canal gave them a warm welcome and sent back word to the Royal Air Force that they were holding a target conveniently concentrated for bombing.

On Wednesday morning, May 29th, the great V between Calais, Valenciennes, and Zeebrugge which the Allies had held only five days before had contracted to a narrow tongue of land running from a point west of Dunkirk through Bailleul to Armentières, thirty-four miles south-east of Dunkirk, and from there turning north to Ypres (twelve miles north of Armentières), and following the line of the Yser Canal to Dixmude and the sea at Nieuport. During Wednesday this area contracted farther—even though the British soldiers, fully aware that they were fighting

for life and honour, were roused to yet greater fierceness by their furious anger at the merciless treatment meted out to thousands of refugees haplessly caught in the murderous German cross-fire. By Wednesday evening the Germans had taken by storm both Ypres and the Kemmel Ridge five miles to the south-west. German troops advancing from the west had occupied Armentières. At Bailleul fighting was still in progress. At Cassel, twelve miles north-west of Bailleul and fifteen miles south of Dunkirk, a paradoxical situation had arisen ; for the Allies had to defend the French frontier fortifications there, not against an enemy who was advancing from the Belgian frontier six miles to the east—the contingency for which the fortifications were designed—but against German forces which took them in the rear from the west. The Cassel fortifications were also stormed during Wednesday ; and their fall threatened the communications of the British troops in the Ypres area (sixteen miles east of Cassel) with the sea at Dunkirk, and also imperilled the French forces cut off around Lille who were likewise fighting their way through to the sea with what the French High Command communiqué that evening rightly termed “ indomitable resolution.” Meanwhile, Dunkirk itself had been transformed into an entrenched camp and was firmly held by French marines under Vice-Admiral Abrial ; the water-lines east and west of Dunkirk had been flooded ; squadrons of the Royal Air Force were establishing that local mastery of the air without which all might have been lost ; and warships of the Royal Navy, hampering and impeding the Germans by their covering and supporting fire, were already giving the enemy a foretaste of the sea power which in the end snatched the Allied forces at Dunkirk literally from the very jaws of destruction.

Next day—Thursday, May 30th—the Germans advanced farther. South of the line running from Cassel eleven miles north-east to Poperinghe, the German armies attacking from the west, east, and south joined hands. Important bodies of Allied troops—mainly French—were cut off ; but the vanguard of General Prioux’s French First Army, consisting of two divisions, broke through the German trap with their tanks and reached Dunkirk. General Prioux himself and many other high French officers were reported by the official German News Agency that evening to have been captured at Steenvorde, a small town just inside the French frontier five miles east of Cassel.

During the next few days the flooded areas on both sides of Dunkirk created increasing difficulties for the German advance ; and the British and French forces in the Dunkirk zone maintained their stubborn defence



BRITISH TROOPS AT DUNKIRK FIRING ON ENEMY AIRCRAFT

of its perimeter or waited patiently on the dunes and beaches for the boats that were to bear them to safety. South-west of Dunkirk the water-lines extended from the neighbourhood of Gravelines almost to St. Omer. North-east of Dunkirk they spread over a width of two or three miles along the valley of the Yser from Nieuport to Ypres. The water needed time to soak into the soil and turn it into mud that would hold up tanks as well as men. For the time thus required the men at Dunkirk had to thank the defenders of Calais.

On Friday, May 31st, the sector in Allied hands had shrunk to a narrow strip between Furnes, thirteen miles along the coast east of Dunkirk; Bergues, five miles inland and south of the city; and a point to the west. From Bergues the Germans were able to bring Dunkirk and its beaches under increasing artillery fire. On Saturday, June 1st, German pressure from the east narrowed the area which the Allies were holding. Nieuport, seventeen miles north-east of Dunkirk, and the coast north-west of it were taken. Adinkerke, three miles west of Furnes, and Ghyvelde, six miles east of Dunkirk, fell into German hands. Bergues held out for another two days; but on Monday, June 3rd, the German communiqué announced that "German forces, in co-operation with the air arm, were able to force a way into [this] strongly fortified town."

During all these last days at Dunkirk while the Royal Navy, with, if possible, more than its usual efficiency, was destroying German batteries ashore from ships far out to sea and organizing the armada of small craft which the difficult task of evacuation required, and while tens of thousands were being floated across in ever-increasing numbers to England and safety, the men who remained, whether actively engaged in defending the Dunkirk position or merely waiting on the beaches and along the dunes, retained all of their fighting spirit, their gentleness, and their unshakable morale. The tone of the German communiqués, which began by talking about "annihilation" and ended by referring almost with an undertone of praise to the stubbornness of the defence, testifies to the fighting spirit. So, too, do stories of typical minor actions. For example, a hundred men of the Royal Artillery, their guns abandoned or destroyed in accordance with orders, and armed only with rifles and bayonets, held positions in the line for more than twenty-four hours against a much larger and better-equipped German force. When units of an Irish regiment arrived to support them, both charged with the bayonet and drove the Germans back. Again, when a party of the Black Watch who had been engaged in the rearguard fighting arrived to find a

vessel leaving and every inch of deck space crowded, they enquired when the next ship which could take them would come. "Not for two hours," was the answer. "Very well, boys," said the officer in command, turning to his men: "We may just as well go back and do a bit more. It's no use wasting time here."

Incidents which show the gentleness and chivalry of these men are numberless. At Dunkirk there was no spirit of catch for himself and the devil take the hindmost. The fit and well refused to leave until the wounded and the nurses were taken off—and the nurses were no less obstinate in standing by their charges. One soldier picked up a small baby lying by the side of its dead mother and brought it to safety. The story of the cross-Channel journey suggests that the foster-father encountered unfamiliar embarrassments from the child he had saved. In one town another man, a burly sergeant, collected a couple of small boys who for some tragic reason were out in the streets during a perfect tempest of fire. Suddenly a lull came; and in the momentary silence the sergeant heard howls from the frightened bundles of humanity he held under each arm. Annoyance loosed his tongue. "You little blighters!" he said. "Stop that blinking noise!" This protective gentleness extended to animals. Not only were their own pets and regimental mascots watchfully saved. Dogs whom days of confusion and terror had left masterless also attached themselves to the soldiers who waited on the beaches and, with an instinctive understanding on both sides, were brought away to safety.

The perfect order of the retreat and the events of the days of waiting told their own tale of discipline and morale. Beneath an inferno of fire the troops who were embarking from the only jetty that fierce air attack had left Dunkirk stood steady as a rock and drawn up as though on parade till their turn came to go on board. The weary and battle-worn thousands who had to wait remained patient and cheerful. On the long, level, sandy beaches of Dunkirk there was not an inch of natural cover. Shell-fire and bombing raked them continuously. Not only morale, but humour, remained unshakable to the end. Some soldiers dug out a bit of cover with children's spades. Others lay in old bomb craters on the principle that bombs never hit the same spot twice. Others played scratch games of football. Despite the intense fire, the men in one unit were ordered down to the sea to shave and freshen themselves up. They went cheerfully. Only one subject caused grumbling—the monotony of the food. Sardines and bully-beef—which could be easily transported

from England in tins—were the staple diet at Dunkirk. By the time the evacuation was over, they were not popular.

As the days wore on, the numbers who had gone to safety gradually increased and the numbers still to go diminished. At last so few remained that the War Office felt that Lord Gort, the Commander-in-Chief, could also be ordered home. Every British unit but the rearguard had reached the sea; and even then he let two more boats go without him. The end was indeed approaching. The honour of holding the enemy to the last was claimed by the French. The final embarkations took place under the fire of German machine-guns. During the night of Monday, June 3rd, to Tuesday, June 4th, the remaining troops were withdrawn. Admiral Abrial was the last man to leave. The ordeal of Dunkirk, which the patience, discipline, resource, courage, and self-sacrifice of men had turned into a miracle, was at long last over.

On Tuesday, May 28th, Mr. Churchill, in words of grave foreboding, warned the House of Commons and the nation that they should prepare themselves "for hard and heavy tidings." On that day King Leopold's betrayal of Belgium and his Allies, the tempestuous pace and overpowering might of the German Army, and the impossible position of the Allied forces in one of the worst strategical traps history has ever witnessed, threatened the annihilation of the British Expeditionary Force and complete destruction of the French armies fighting beside it. Precisely a week later, on June 4th, Mr. Churchill gave thanks from his place in Parliament for what he rightly called "a miracle of deliverance." On May 28th Mr. Churchill and other good judges thought that perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 men might be re-embarked. On June 4th, over 335,000 men, French and British, had been saved.

This rescue of the heart and core of the British Expeditionary Force, and of thousands of gallant French troops as well, however magnificent the deeds that brought it to pass, was not a victory. Mr. Churchill was careful to warn his hearers against mistaking it for one. In the accomplishments of the Royal Air Force there was, it is true, a victory *within* this deliverance which Mr. Churchill pointed out in words as winged as the planes and the dauntless spirit that bore the British airmen to their triumph. With the air, however, this chapter is not concerned; and on land the Allies—to use Mr. Churchill's own words—had suffered "a colossal military disaster."

In men, the tale of British casualties, though grievous, was about one-

third of the number lost in the opening of the great battle of March 21st, 1918, when the Germans began the last great advance they were to make before their defeat eight months later. Far heavier casualties had certainly been inflicted on the enemy. But the British Army had lost nearly 1,000 guns—almost as many as in the March 1918 battle—and all the armoured vehicles that were with the Army in the north. Weeks at the very least were bound to pass before those material losses could be made good.

Even more important, the German armies had overrun the whole of the Low Countries and northern France. They had overcome the Dutch and Belgian Armies, numbering together about a million men. They had destroyed or taken prisoner most of the fifteen or sixteen best-equipped divisions in the French Army. They had crashed through great fortifications as though these were putty. They had conquered more ground in twenty-six days in 1940 than they were able to win in fifty-two months between 1914 and 1918. They occupied once more the great industrial districts of Belgium and northern France from whence came vast quantities of the coal, the chemicals, and the steel that modern war requires. Their strategic position for future attack was more threatening to both Britain and France than ever before. Their High Command had proved that, at least in this campaign, they could learn from the mistakes of the past and adapt the plans of many years' standing to new requirements and successful use. German soldiers had received their baptism of fire and by their victories had created a new legend of German conquest. Their arms, their organization, their tactics ; the new and ingenious, always brutal and often base methods of warfare which the best German minds, concentrating for years on the problem of exploiting material force to the utmost, had devised ; all these things had proved that they possessed unprecedented power.

Against these entries in the grim and bloodstained account of the Flanders campaign the Allies could place few off-setting items. For them the Flanders Campaign *was*, unmistakably and unequivocally, "a colossal military disaster." Its consequences for France were to appear cruelly and soon. In the case of Britain they were at least delayed, even while Britain's peril was immeasurably increased.

And yet neither Mr. Churchill, to judge by the whole tone of his magnificent speech of June 4th, nor the Anglo-Saxon world, nor the British people regarded the disaster of Flanders as in any sense a milestone on the road to Britain's defeat and downfall. Mr. Churchill ended his speech with ringing and noble words that expressed the heartfelt, the



BRITISH TROOPS LEAVING DUNKIRK

FORMING INTO WINDING QUEUES READY TO BOARD SMALL BOATS WHICH TOOK THEM TO LARGER VESSELS

passionate, the unshakable resolve of practically every person of British blood or connexion throughout the world.

“Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen, or may fall, into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule,” said Mr. Churchill, “we shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France. We shall fight on the seas and oceans. We shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air. We shall defend our island whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches. We shall fight on the landing-grounds. We shall fight in the fields and in the streets. We shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender. And even if—which I do not for a moment believe—this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle until in God’s good time the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and liberation of the Old.”

Thus Mr. Churchill. The *New York Times* only put into more moving words what men and women of English speech and sympathy were saying and thinking and feeling throughout the long anxious week during which the evacuation of Dunkirk went on.

“So long as the English tongue survives, the word Dunkirk will be spoken with reverence. In that harbour—such a hell as never blazed on earth before—at the end of a lost battle, the rags and blemishes that had hidden the soul of democracy fell away.

“There, beaten but unconquered, in shining splendour, she faced the enemy, this shining thing in the souls of free men which Hitler cannot command. It is the great tradition of democracy. It is the future. It is victory.”

The British people shared this belief to the full. Even at the very end of July 1940 the blow on Britain with which Hitler should at once have followed his conquest of Flanders and his defeat of France had still not fallen. None knew when, or even whether, it would fall. Yet the British spirit, far from being undermined or weakened by the dire experiences it had been through or the grim threats which the future seemed to hold, was stronger than ever before. The forces at Dunkirk, like the Prodigal Son in the parable, ought, according to all human calculation, to have been doomed and damned; but by the mysteries of faith they were saved. From this lesson the British people, staunch also in a faith their most articulate sons have never fully expressed, drew their own moral and knew no fear.

CHAPTER 2

NAVAL OPERATIONS

BY REGINALD CAMPBELL

DECEMBER 1939 opened with the news of the scuttling of the German liner *Watussi*, 9,500 tons, in South African waters, as a result of her being dogged by South African reconnaissance aeroplanes in the teeth of a raging south-east gale. The ship was set on fire by the captain after the passengers and crew had been placed in the boats, and it was with difficulty that British warships were able to pick them up and take them to Simonstown. Once again the British Navy was fulfilling the rôle of rescuer as well as of destroyer of the King's enemies.

At home, machines of the Royal Air Force were also not idle, for on December 2nd attacks on German warships in the vicinity of Heligoland were carried out, hits being obtained on a cruiser and some destroyers. A U-boat was caught in a surprise attack in the North Sea, a direct hit being scored at the base of the conning tower, and she sank, with no survivors.

On December 6th the First Lord of the Admiralty gave a review in the House of Commons of the naval war of the past three months. He confirmed that U-boats were being destroyed at the rate of from two to four a week, which was at a greater rate than the Germans could replace either the boats or the trained crews to man them. He disclosed that several U-boat commanders had sought to emulate the daring of Commander Prien, who had penetrated the defences of Scapa Flow and sunk the *Royal Oak*, as a result of which "several graves of U-boats" lay at the approaches to our defended harbours. One thousand merchant vessels had already been armed in self-defence, and it would not be long before that number was doubled. For every 1,000 tons of British shipping sunk, 110,000 tons had entered British ports. As regards naval vessels, the total losses came to 50,000 tons, and comprised the *Courageous*, *Royal Oak*, two destroyers, a submarine, and the armed merchant cruiser *Rawalpindi*. Nearly one million tons of warships were in the process of being built.

Two days after Mr. Churchill's speech the destroyer *Jersey*, 1,690 tons,

was struck by a torpedo and sustained some twenty casualties ; she succeeded in reaching port, however. A further U-boat was destroyed by machines of the R.A.F., and seven survivors from the Norwegian steamer *Arcturus*, who had been clinging for twenty-six hours to two small rafts after their ship was mined, were picked up by two merchant vessels after aeroplanes had directed them to the scene. The 8,000-ton Royal Mail Line cargo vessel *Navasota* was reported as having been torpedoed in the Atlantic, and there were further losses from mine and collision amongst neutral ships. On December 11th the Admiralty announced that the minesweeping drifter *Ray of Hope* had been blown up by a mine, with nine of her crew killed or missing.

Further news now arrived concerning the *Bremen*, Germany's crack 51,700-ton liner which, as reported earlier in this history, had made a dash from New York three days after the outbreak of war and, by taking an extreme northerly route to avoid British patrols, arrived at the Russian port of Murmansk towards the end of September. Here, being a merchant vessel, she had been free under international law to remain as long as she liked. On December 12th, however, the German Admiralty announced that the *Bremen* had arrived safely at Bremerhaven, and that while on her journey south from Murmansk she had been attacked by a British submarine in the North Sea, the submarine being forced to break off the attack and dive, owing to the action of the *Bremen's* escorting aircraft. The correct version of this was, as stated in the British Admiralty's communiqué, that the *Bremen* passed within torpedo range of the submarine, but was allowed to proceed because the presence of the German aircraft made it impossible for the submarine to rise and order her to stop and her crew to take to the boats before torpedoing her ; had it been a mere question of torpedoing her on sight, it could have easily been done. Critics were not lacking who promptly stated that, since Germany herself had never hesitated to break international law whenever it suited her, the British Government were showing too much of the gloved hand in not ordering her destruction. The commander of the submarine—she was the *Salmon*—was, of course, acting strictly under orders in letting her go. At the same time it was announced by the North German Lloyd line in New York that the German liner *New York*, 22,200 tons, had also reached Germany via Murmansk.

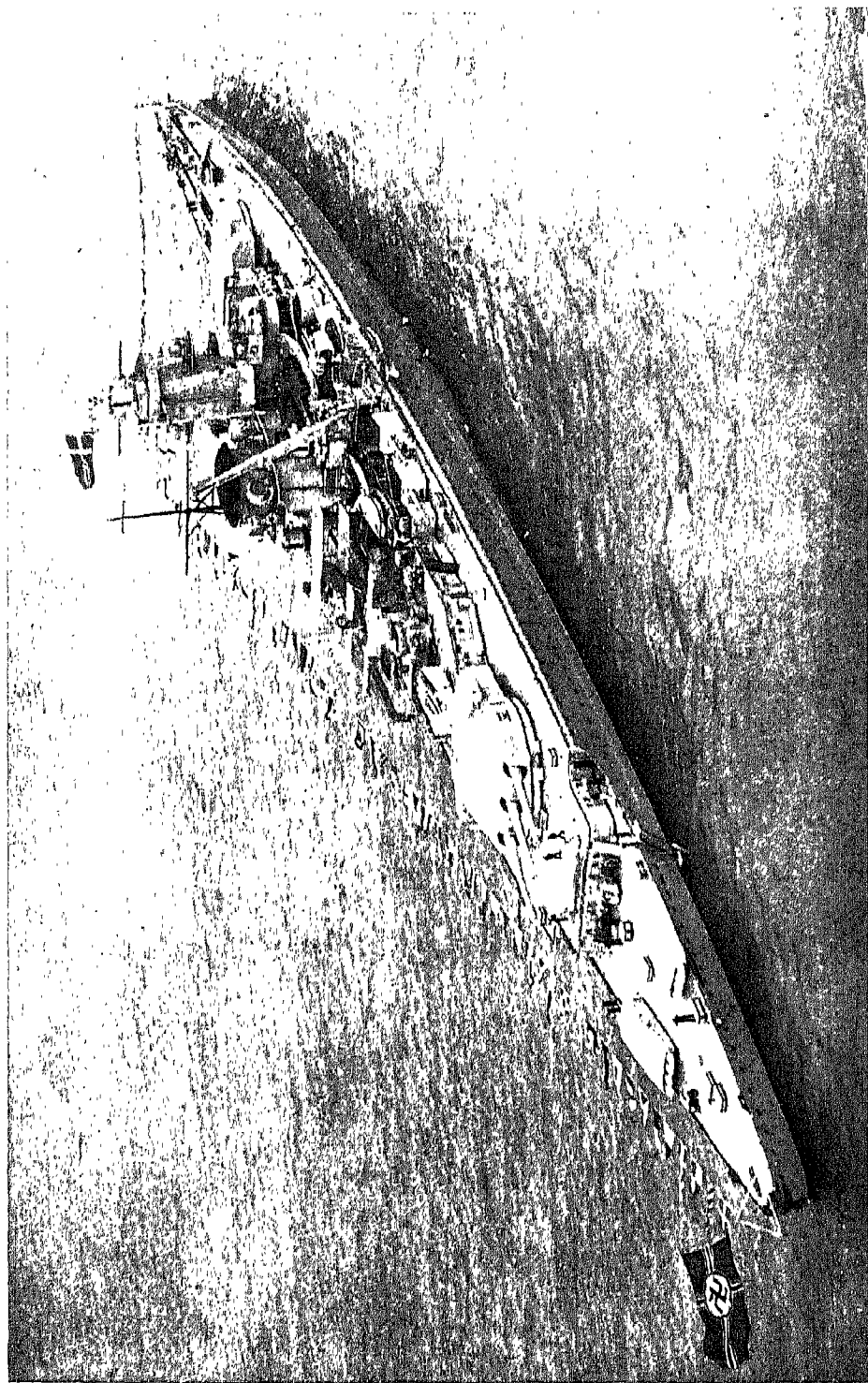
But now news of a very different nature was to come flashing across the ocean from the waters of the far South Atlantic. At long last, after months of inevitable loss incurred by the stealth of mine and torpedo, a

stand-up naval engagement between armed and armoured ships had taken place, resulting in a victory for the British Navy. And in a hundred thousand homes in Britain hearts lifted at the thought of those "few, glittering hours" experienced by their sailors.

The pocket battleship *Graf Spee*, which was at first thought to be the *Admiral Scheer*, had for some time past been prowling in the South Atlantic, her victims during September and October being the British ships *Clement*, *Newton Beach*, *Ashlea*, *Huntsman*, and *Trevanion*. To these she added in November and the beginning of December the steamers *Africa Shell*, *Doric Star*, *Tairoa*, and *Streonshalh*, making nine in all. The captains and chief engineers of these vessels, together with a few of the lower ranks and ratings, the *Graf Spee* kept on board herself, but the majority of the crews, to the number of 303, she placed on board the large 17,000-ton tanker-built vessel *Altmark*, which was acting as supply ship for her and which became in addition her prison ship.

The last sinking, that of the *Streonshalh*, found the *Graf Spee* off the South American coast again after she had made a double crossing of the South Atlantic. Searching for her and any other raiders, there were amongst others Commodore H. H. Harwood, O.B.E., R.N., in command of the South American Division and flying his broad pennant in the cruiser *Ajax*, the *Ajax* herself being commanded by Captain C. H. L. Woodhouse. From intelligence he had received, the Commodore was aware of the *Graf Spee*'s rough course, and he therefore suspected her of having intentions against British coastal shipping in this quarter. He accordingly stationed the cruisers *Ajax*, *Achilles* (from the New Zealand division), and *Exeter* to the eastward, which is to the seaward, of the River Plate in the hopes of making an encounter. The cruiser *Cumberland* he signalled up from the north to reinforce him.

At 6.10 a.m. on Wednesday, December 13th, the morning being fine with good visibility and the sea smooth, he was rewarded by the sight of smoke, and shortly the *Graf Spee*, for she it turned out to be, was observed approaching. It was now a clear case of a stand-up fight between three British cruisers and a German pocket battleship, with plenty of sea room and a fine day. The armaments of the ships were as follows: *Ajax* (Captain Woodhouse) and *Achilles* (Captain Parry), eight six-inch guns each, *Exeter* (Captain Bell), six eight-inch. The armament of the *Graf Spee* consisted of six eleven-inch guns in two triple turrets, and eight five-point-nine-inch guns. The tonnage of the cruisers was 6,840, 7,030, and 8,390 against the *Graf Spee*'s 10,000.



THE GERMAN POCKET-BATTLESHIP THE ADMIRAL GRAF SPEE

The captains of the British cruisers knew, from conferences held previously with the Commodore, exactly what to do, and all three proceeded to engage her, the *Exeter*, being the heaviest-gunned ship of the three, taking one flank of the enemy and the *Ajax* and *Achilles* the other. Immediately Captain Langsdorff, the captain of the *Graf Spee*, concentrated his heavy eleven-inch guns on the *Exeter*, his biggest adversary, in the hopes of knocking her out quickly and leaving him free to deal with the two lighter cruisers. The *Exeter*, while inflicting severe punishment on the *Graf Spee* with her eight-inch guns, was herself severely damaged, gun after gun being knocked out on board her, her decks blazing with a dozen different fires, her flats below filled with the choking fumes of shell-bursts. Numerous compartments had to be flooded to prevent the ship being blown up. Finally, after receiving between forty and fifty direct hits with heavy shells, and with all but one of her guns knocked out and a hundred casualties, she was forced to fall astern, and so gradually dropped out of the fight.

The *Ajax* and *Achilles* signified their undauntedness on this occurring by darting in and firing at still closer range than before, forcing the *Graf Spee* to turn away and zigzag behind smoke-screens. During this period further punishment was inflicted on her, though both cruisers suffered damage, the *Ajax* losing her mainmast and having two turrets damaged, as well as fires to contend with below. On board the *Achilles* the captain was wounded early in the action whilst standing out on the unprotected bridge, and a lieutenant had to take his place to con the ship ; the *Achilles'* gun-director tower was also damaged, with casualties.

After close on an hour and a half's continuous engagement the two cruisers retired to long range for the purpose of shadowing the *Graf Spee*. Since she was steering due west, it appeared that she was making for the River Plate. There then ensued a long and seemingly endless chase across the sunlit sea, the cruisers never losing touch with the enemy, but every now and then laying smoke-screens for each other and darting in "with inconceivable audacity," to use the words of Captain Langsdorff, in command of the *Graf Spee*, to harass him. As dark fell a final salvo came from the *Graf Spee's* guns, and then, close on midnight, with flames pouring from her funnel, she rushed into Montevideo, where she found temporary safety.

Outside, *Ajax* and *Achilles*, reinforced very shortly by the cruiser *Cumberland*, a fact which enabled Commodore Harwood to send the damaged *Exeter* away to the north to attend to her casualties, were con-

tent to await the enemy's reappearance. They knew that international law provides that a man-of-war of a belligerent nation must leave a neutral port within forty-eight hours at the most—twenty-four in some cases—provided she is seaworthy; her *fighting* capabilities do not come under consideration in this respect. If the *Graf Spee* had been rendered unseaworthy, the British cruisers would get her in the end, especially as reinforcement, in the shape of the battle-cruiser *Renown*, was rushing across the Atlantic from Cape Town. If the *Graf Spee* still remained seaworthy, then her fighting efficiency had obviously been impaired, and they would get her within forty-eight hours.

Captain Langsdorff, in Montevideo harbour, took stock of his unenviable position. His control tower, which directs the gunnery of the ship, was badly damaged, his galley was smashed, the crew's sleeping quarters were wrecked, she had numerous holes in her side, some by the water-line having let in a considerable amount of water, and she had over a hundred casualties. None the less, the ship had incurred no such vital damage as would prevent her from putting to sea for some time to come, and he must therefore get on to repairs affecting both her seaworthiness and fighting qualities and at the same time persuade the Uruguayan authorities to grant him as long a time as possible in their port.

The authorities, after inspection and in spite of the German Embassy's protest, allowed him till 8 p.m. on Sunday, December 17th, for remaining in harbour. All the Thursday and Friday the crew of the *Graf Spee* worked feverishly on repairs—tons of steel plates had to be brought on board to shore up her gaping wounds—and provisions and fuel were also taken in. The British prisoners that had been cooped up down below were released and sent ashore, and their joy and relief can be imagined.

Captain Langsdorff again went ashore, this time to report on the grievous situation to Berlin. Back came the answer: the ship must be scuttled. Captain Langsdorff, returning on board, had all but a skeleton crew transferred to a German merchant ship in the harbour, the *Tacoma*, and then made his preparations. At 6 p.m. on the Sunday, December 17th, at the very time when she should have been steaming out to engage her enemies, the *Graf Spee* moved slowly out of harbour and, when four miles from land, blew herself up, the captain and the skeleton crew being taken off in a launch after the fuse had been lit. Some parts of her, however, remained above water for a long time.

Two nights later Captain Langsdorff, unable to face the disgrace that he had been ordered to bring upon his ship, committed suicide by shooting

himself with a revolver while in the room provided him at the Argentine naval arsenal. He had acted as an officer and a gentleman, and his passing was mourned by friend and foe.

Commodore Harwood was promoted to Rear-Admiral and awarded a knighthood. The captains of *Ajax*, *Achilles*, and *Exeter* were made Companions of the Order of the Bath, and numerous other promotions and decorations were given to other ranks and ratings of these three ships to mark one of the most brilliant actions in the records of the Royal Navy's stirring history.

Meanwhile, further successes were reported in waters nearer home, this time as a result of the deeds of the British submarines *Ursula* and *Salmon*. The *Ursula*, a small vessel of 540 tons as opposed to the 1,500 tons of an ocean-going submarine, had negotiated a series of minefields in the Heligoland Bight and torpedoed and sunk a *Koeln* class cruiser of 6,000 tons which had been screened by six destroyers. The *Salmon's* cruise—she was another small vessel of 670 tons—had been still more adventurous. Almost at the start of it she had encountered a German submarine outward bound on the surface and torpedoed her, the wreckage going two hundred feet up into the air. Then had followed the exasperating incident of having to let the liner *Bremen* go by, and then, less than twenty-four hours later, she had sighted part of the German Fleet, out on one of its rare excursions. The fleet consisted of two of Germany's latest battleships, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, one pocket battleship, two heavy cruisers, the *Hipper* and *Bluecher*, and a cruiser of the *Leipzig* class. At these she fired six torpedoes, set on slightly different courses so as to do damage to as many ships as possible. Three hits were heard, but she had to dive owing to attacks of light craft, and on return later she found the sea thickly coated with oil for four miles. The *Leipzig* class cruiser could be considered sunk, and probably one other vessel seriously damaged. On the reverse side, the British destroyer *Duchess*, 1,375 tons, was lost in collision at sea at this time with the loss of nearly all hands, amounting to 129 officers and men.

On December 17th the first Canadian contingent of troops arrived safely in England and were welcomed by Mr. Eden, Dominions Secretary. The troop-ships had been escorted across the Atlantic by French and British warships.

The Nazi Air Force now began to turn its attention more and more to the bombing and machine-gunning of the smacks and trawlers of fishermen in the North Sea; cases had occurred before, but not to so

great an extent, and it was evident that the onslaught on these defenceless men was made for the purpose of offsetting the recent British naval victories. Hundreds of attacks, which were pressed with the greatest ferocity, were made, and many fishing vessels sunk, the Germans claiming the sinking of twenty-three of England's "light naval forces."

In contrast to the safe arrival in Germany of the *Bremen* and *New York*, on December 19th, the third largest ship of the German mercantile marine, the 32,600-ton liner *Columbus*, scuttled herself on her way from Mexico on finding herself intercepted by a British warship. In her went 25,000 barrels of Mexican oil to the bottom. This made the eighteenth German vessel to be scuttled.

The British Contraband Control now announced that to date, since the outbreak of the war, over 510,000 tons of contraband destined for Germany had been seized. The petroleum products amounted to 28 million gallons, or more than enough to fill to capacity the tanks of every motor vehicle on the roads in Britain. The Control also announced the introduction by the Ministry of Economic Warfare of a "navicert" system to help shippers sending goods from the Americas to certain European countries, the shippers furnishing the British Government's representatives in advance with details of the goods they proposed to export; this, it was hoped, would greatly hasten the clearing of ships through the contraband control ports.

On December 27th British aeroplanes attacked German warships near the German coast, consisting of some destroyers and patrol vessels; at least one direct hit was made. On the same day details became known of the unusual features attending the torpedoing of the London tanker *San Alberto*, 7,400 tons. On the 9th she was torpedoed without warning, the ship breaking in two and the crew abandoning her. The fore part of the ship sank immediately, but the after part remained afloat, and after several hours in the open boats, in storm and driving rain, the captain decided to return with the crew to the portion that still floated. This was done, and they were then actually able to restart the engines and run her slowly astern. Other ships now coming to the rescue, attempts were made to take the half-ship in tow, but owing to the rising sea these were eventually given up as hopeless, and the crew, after spending another twenty-four hours in the *San Alberto*, abandoned her for a second time and reached the other vessels. The after part of the ship then sank.

The losses for the last week of the year 1939 were low, only three British vessels, totalling 3,056 tons, being sunk, and two neutrals, totalling

HMS 4/4A



1,643 tons. Sharp rises were, however, to occur again, and there was no falling off in the effort being put forth to counteract the peril to British ships and British seamen from mine, torpedo, and bomb.

The year 1940 opened with the announcement by the Minister of Shipping that all ships on the United Kingdom and Colonial registers engaged on the deep-sea liner trades would come under full Government control on February 1st. This scheme of control, it was stated, would enable material economies to be made in tonnage and ensure its more effective use. Owners would remain responsible for the crews and upkeep of requisitioned liners, and operate them in compliance with Government instructions as to cargo and route programmes.

On January 7th the Ellerman liner *City of Marseilles*, 8,300 tons, was mined off the coast of Scotland, with fourteen casualties; an R.A.F. aeroplane guided a lifeboat and launches to the spot where the ship lay. She was later brought safely to port by three tugs, her cargo of jute being damaged. The Newcastle steamer *Towneley*, 2,890 tons, was also mined the same day off the south-east coast, the ship being lost, but all the crew saved, as also was the case of the 5,100-ton *Cedrington Court*. Another big loss came on January 9th, when the 10,000-ton Union Castle liner *Dunbar Castle* struck a mine and sank with her upper works showing. She was carrying fifty passengers, including nine children, and had a crew of 150. Survivors spoke of a terrific explosion at 1.45 p.m., which caused the ship to sink in twenty minutes; the lifeboats were lowered and quickly picked up by vessels putting out from shore. The captain was killed and some of the crew and passengers were injured; only one passenger was missing. Another large vessel, the 8,500-ton tanker *British Liberty*, was mined in the North Sea, with the loss of twenty lives.

On the same day, January 9th, German aeroplanes, under cover of mist, made a series of raids on unescorted merchant vessels off the east coasts of England and Scotland, and a Trinity House vessel, which was relieving lightship crews, was bombed and gunned for half an hour, sustaining thirty casualties. Three vessels were sunk. Two days later more attacks were made, but the raiders were driven off by machines of the R.A.F., with the loss of three of their number. The attacks were renewed two days later, three more ships being sunk.

On January 13th the French Minister of Marine reviewed the activity of the French Navy during the first four months of the war. French colonial troops had been brought in large numbers to France, he said, and not a single man had been lost; all the army material from North Africa

had come across safely. Ten submarines had been sunk by the French Navy, and not one single French warship had been lost.

On the same day the 8,000-ton Dutch motor-ship *Arendskerck*, bound from Antwerp for South Africa with a cargo of piece goods, was deliberately torpedoed by the Germans after they had searched her and examined her cargo. More and more it was becoming obvious that the wild beast, its ears flattened, was lashing out as and where its fury directed it, regardless of what it encountered. On this occasion Germany made no attempt to deny her responsibility for the sinking of the *Arendskerck*.

On January 16th the officers and men of the British mercantile marine who had been held captive in the *Graf Spee* until released at Montevideo as a result of the battle of the Plate arrived in England. They numbered fifty-six. Perhaps it was fitting that they should have steamed up the Thames Estuary in the cold light of a January day, and that it was the drab hull of an honest British meat-ship that had brought them back, these wanderers from the far, sunlit waters. To them these drab surroundings must have spoken to them the one magic word—home.

The loss of the first British submarines as a result of enemy action was now announced ; they were the *Starfish*, *Seahorse*, and *Undine*, all small vessels of between 500 and 600 tons and carrying crews of forty. They were sunk in the Heligoland Bight, and sixty-seven survivors were picked up from the *Undine* and *Starfish*. The *Seahorse* was lost with all hands.

Because till now no British submarines had been lost through enemy action, this was far from meaning that they had been idle. As in the case of the *Ursula* and *Salmon*, for month after month they had been patrolling outside and inside enemy waters, facing perils from mine and net and depth-charge and bomb. And not only were they in danger from their enemies ; they had to avoid their friends as well ; the swooping bomber, the deadly destroyer, does not pause to examine the maker's pattern on a periscope cutting the water, but acts swiftly. The lot of the submarines, from the time they leave port until they return to it, is a strange, lonely, perilous world that demands coolness and ice-cold courage.

The price of Admiralty was again given mournful prominence by the loss on January 21st of H.M. Destroyer *Grenville*, 1,500 tons, through striking a mine in the North Sea ; some eighty of the crew were missing, drowned in the bitter cold of a particularly bitter winter. Great bravery was shown by ratings who were in charge of the depth-charges, and who, disregarding their own safety, remained to render the charges safe, so that they would not explode on the ship sinking and kill the men struggling in

the water. Two days later the loss of her sister ship, the *Exmouth*, with all hands, was announced, the cause being either mine or torpedo. One hundred and seventy-five perished in her. The captain of the *Exmouth* had in December been awarded the D.S.O. for successful action against submarines whilst in command of her. It was also learnt on the same day that the Italian liner *Orazio*, 11,700 tons, was on fire and in a sinking condition sixty miles off Barcelona, and that the majority of her passengers and crew, which numbered close on one thousand, had been rescued by French destroyers. The fire had apparently originated in the engine-room.

Attention was now briefly turned to the distant waters of the Pacific through the following communiqué issued at Hong-Kong :

“ The British naval authorities announce that certain German personnel of military age who were *en route* to Germany and who would be particularly useful to the German war effort were today removed from the Japanese trans-Pacific liner *Asama Maru*, on the high seas in the north Pacific, by a British naval unit in accordance with the usage of international law.”

The Germans numbered twenty-one, and were endeavouring to return to Germany from America via Siberia. Japan immediately protested on the grounds that the Germans were not actually embodied in the armed forces of that country. Another Japanese liner, the *Tatuta Maru*, 17,000 tons, was stopped by the British Navy in the Pacific 170 miles out from San Francisco, but was allowed to proceed without search. The Japanese owners of these two ships then announced that they would no longer permit Germans of military age to travel in the vessels of their company.

On January 27th the First Lord of the Admiralty stated that at least half the U-boats with which Germany had begun the war had been destroyed, and that German new building had so far fallen short of what the British had estimated. From using the gun the U-boats had been driven to using the torpedo, and from using the torpedo to laying the mine. The mine situation was admittedly dangerous, but that in turn would be overcome. In spite of the daily losses of shipping, these facts remained : it was five hundred to one against any ship which accepted Admiralty advice and joined a British convoy being sunk ; out of nearly 7,500 ships convoyed, only fifteen had so far been lost ; the volume of British imports and exports, inevitably checked by the change-over from peace

to war, was now steadily increasing. The ships captured by the British together with those built had almost replaced losses.

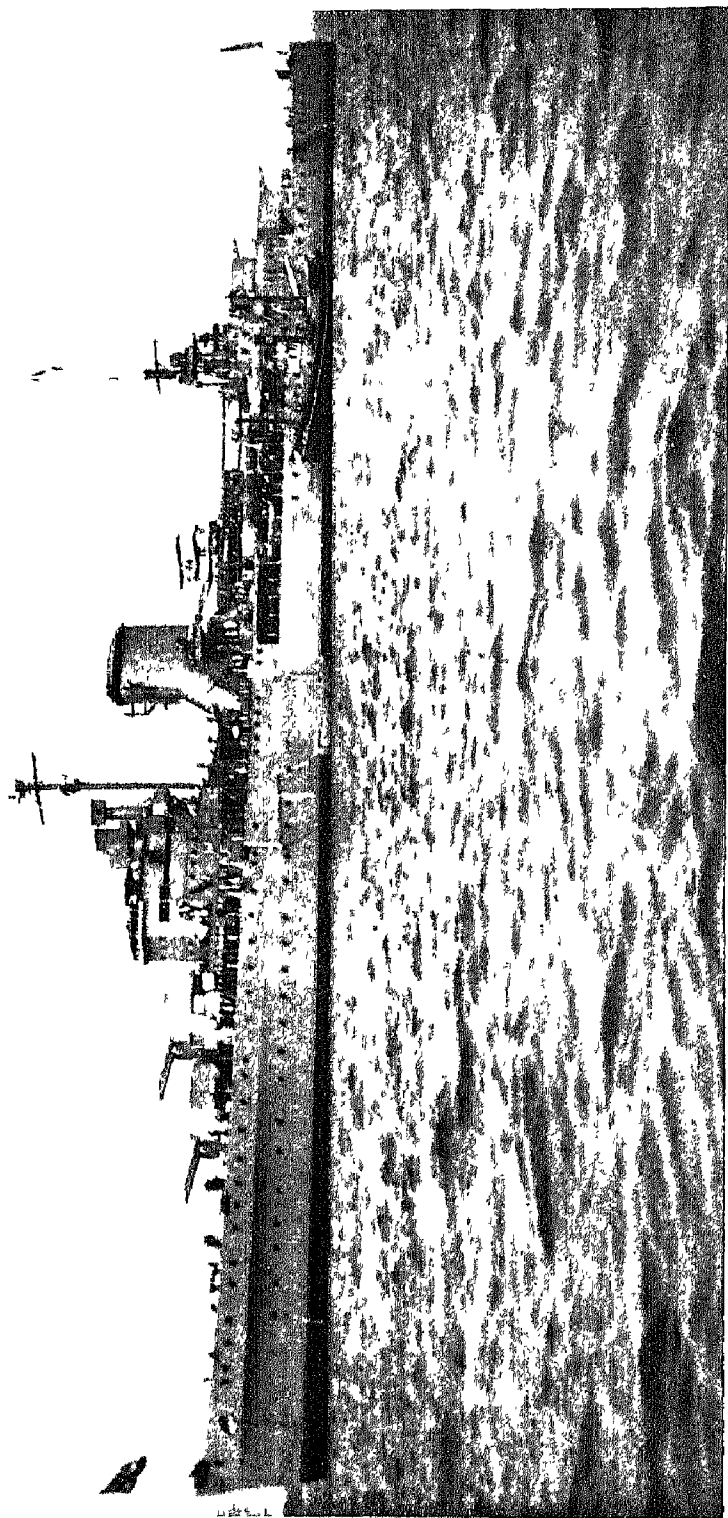
Coming events now began to cast their shadows over northern waters, and by the end of January it was becoming clear that Germany had designs on Norway or Sweden or both. A great amount of German shipping had been assembled in German Baltic ports, together with fleets of flat-bottomed boats from which German troops were practising landing. The Swedes had been mining the Sound as a counter-measure to the German mining that had been taking place in Swedish waters, and German aircraft had been repeatedly flying over the Swedish minefields and coasts for the purpose of photographing them.

On January 29th and 30th the enemy made the most ambitious series of aerial attacks on British coastal shipping he had yet attempted—over a four-hundred-mile front along the east coast, from the mouth of the Tay to the Kentish coast. Four ships were sunk or became total losses. The raiders were driven off by machines of the R.A.F.

The losses for the week ended January 27th in mercantile shipping provided striking illustration of the success of the British convoy system, only one British and two French ships being sunk; ten defenceless, unescorted neutral vessels were, however, lost. The percentage of convoyed ships lost remained at 0·2.

On January 30th a German submarine attacked a convoy and successfully torpedoed and sank the British tanker *Vachte*, 5,000 tons. The crew were rescued by an Italian steamer, and the convoy's naval escort immediately counter-attacked with depth-charges. Contact was lost after she had dived, and later a flying-boat of the R.A.F. coastal command joined in the search. The submarine, which had been damaged by the depth-charges and meanwhile had been forced to come to the surface, was located by the flying-boat and a heavy bomb was dropped. By the time the naval vessels had appeared, the submarine had sunk and some survivors had taken to their rubber boat. These were made prisoners. This operation afforded a further example of the excellent collaboration existing between the Navy and the Air Force Coastal Command in convoying vessels.

February opened with a further air attack on British shipping, but with small success, and with three, if not four, large enemy bombers being brought down. H.M. Minesweeper *Sphinx* was damaged by a bomb and foundered in a heavy sea whilst being towed to port, with the loss of fifty lives.



USS ACHILLES

A Swedish newspaper now published the Swedish mercantile losses to date: they comprised 205 Swedish seamen, or four times the number lost by her in the last war up to the end of 1917, and thirty-one of her ships had gone down, totalling over 60,000 tons.

On February 7th, the 4,300-ton *Munster*, one of the newest of the Irish cross-Channel steamers, was sunk by mine in the Irish Sea. All the two hundred passengers and crew, which included children, were saved by a collier, which raced to the spot in answer to the distress signals. Two days later the Admiralty announced the destruction of two U-boats by the same destroyer, the *Antelope*, 1,350 tons, whilst the former were making attacks on a convoy. The loss by mine was also announced of the s.s. *Chagres*, 5,400 tons, off the north-west coast of England. Her captain was Captain Roberts, mentioned in the previous volume of this history as having been awarded the O.B.E. whilst captain of the *Mopan* for determined conduct in shaking off a submarine. He was the last to leave the *Chagres*, after attempting to get the vessel taken in tow. Fire breaking out on board had, however, made this impossible.

The war had now been in progress five months; British seamen stood firm as ever, their one request being to be given another ship on their own sinking beneath them. Their Majesties the King and Queen, as ever appreciative of the deeds of the mercantile marine, were to be seen, on the 8th of the month, standing on the quay at the Avonmouth docks and engaged in conversation with fifteen sea captains whom they had asked specially to see. There was about this scene, in contrast to the banners and "Seig Heils" of Nazidom, the grandeur of simplicity as the heads of the British Empire talked quietly on the open quay with these master mariners who had sailed the seven seas of the world.

The shadows of war were spreading as Mars loomed larger over the earth. They clouded now the sunlit lands of the pyramids. On February 12th, there arrived at Suez, escorted by British, French, Australian, and New Zealand warships, the Australian and New Zealand Expeditionary Force, Mr. Eden, the Dominions Secretary, being there to meet them as he had met the Canadian contingent. The Force then went into camp in Egypt and Palestine.

On February 13th, Rear-Admiral Harwood, of the Battle of the Plate fame, reported that the 3,800-ton German steamer *Wakama* had scuttled herself off the Brazilian coast on being intercepted by a British cruiser while trying to make a dash for Germany. The steamer *Wolfsburg*, 6,200 tons, also scuttled herself in the same waters about this time.

There now came news of the sinking by two submarines of three large British merchant vessels—the *Gretafield*, 10,200 tons, the *British Triumph*, 8,500 tons, and the *Sultan Star*, 12,300 tons, the *Sultan Star* being a meat ship, the other two tankers. Both the submarines were destroyed, one surviving its victim by only half an hour.

On February 15th, the cruiser which had sustained the brunt of the first part of the Battle of the Plate, H.M.S. *Exeter*, arrived at Plymouth, the First Lord of the Admiralty being amongst those who met her there. "You have come back," he said, "with your honours gathered and your duty done." The *Ajax* being also home, the occasion was made one for great national enthusiasm; the crews a few days later paraded the streets of London amidst wildly cheering crowds, and were entertained to luncheon at the Guildhall by the Lord Mayor.

More echoes of the Plate action were to come thundering across the ocean, to rebound off the iron coast of Norway, and once again the Navy was to have an opportunity for getting "in and at them" in contrast to the normal long-drawn-out routine of defence. H.M. ships and vessels had for some time past been more than interested in the whereabouts of the *Altmark*, the 17,000-ton vessel already referred to as having acted as supply and prison ship to the *Graf Spee*. Since the latter's destruction, the *Altmark* had been suspected of trying to make for Germany with the three hundred British prisoners it was known she had on board her, and it was probable that she would take the extreme northerly route, with its long nights and short days, in order to lessen the chance of capture. On February 15th it became known that she had indeed followed this course and arrived at the Norwegian port of Bergen. Here the *Altmark's* captain, Captain Dau, declared to the Norwegian port authorities that his ship contained nothing but innocent cargo, and he proceeded to drown the cries of the protesting British prisoners below by turning on his steam winches to the full. When they battered at doors and hatch covers he turned the hose on them. Captain Dau was careful that no sign of the armed German guard showed on the *Altmark's* upper deck, and, the Norwegian authorities satisfying themselves after an extremely perfunctory search, if search it could be called at all, the "innocent" *Altmark* was free to continue on down south inside Norwegian territorial waters till nearly home to Germany.

Matters were not to work out to Captain Dau's advantage, however, for now the British Navy came in. On the following day, the 16th, the *Altmark* was sighted by three British aeroplanes which were searching for

her, and shortly afterwards she was approached by two British destroyers, who ordered her to stop. She immediately turned towards the land and fled up the nearest fjord, which happened to be the Joessing Fjord, small and narrow. Outside, Captain P. L. Vian, R.N., of H.M.S. *Cossack*, who was in command of the destroyer flotilla and who knew well of the presence of British prisoners in the *Altmark*, suggested to two Norwegian gunboats which had put in an appearance that the *Altmark* be sent back to Bergen under a joint Norwegian and British guard for a further search to be made there. This suggestion was turned down. Captain Vian then reported the situation by wireless to the British Admiralty, and on receiving the reply he must have been awaiting with enthusiasm, he proceeded to take the *Cossack* up the fjord to rescue the prisoners himself; Germany was ignoring international law, as were the Norwegian authorities so far concerned; it seemed only fair, therefore, that Britain should indulge in similar proceedings.

By now it was dark. The searchlights of the *Cossack* lit up the cold, ice-crackling waters of the fjord. Ahead of her, at the head of the fjord, was the *Altmark*, riding between rocks and ice, and with steam still up. Captain Vian, handling his vessel with consummate skill, succeeded in bringing his ship in the dark up this strange neck of water and alongside the *Altmark*, in spite of the latter going astern in an endeavour to ram him as he approached. The only result of this was that the *Altmark* herself ran aground. The officer in charge of the boarding party, Lieutenant-Commander Turner, R.N., then leapt six feet across the gap on to the German vessel's deck and made for her bridge. By now Captain Dau had put his engines to Full Speed Ahead in order to get his ship off the rocks and once more try to thrust the *Cossack* ashore. Lieutenant-Commander Turner, anticipating this, rushed to the engine-room telegraphs, put them to Stop, and hurried Captain Dau off the bridge and down to his cabin. The remainder of the boarding party—and they numbered only thirty—then hustled the big German crew, which numbered one hundred and twenty, on to the fo'c'sle, where they were kept.

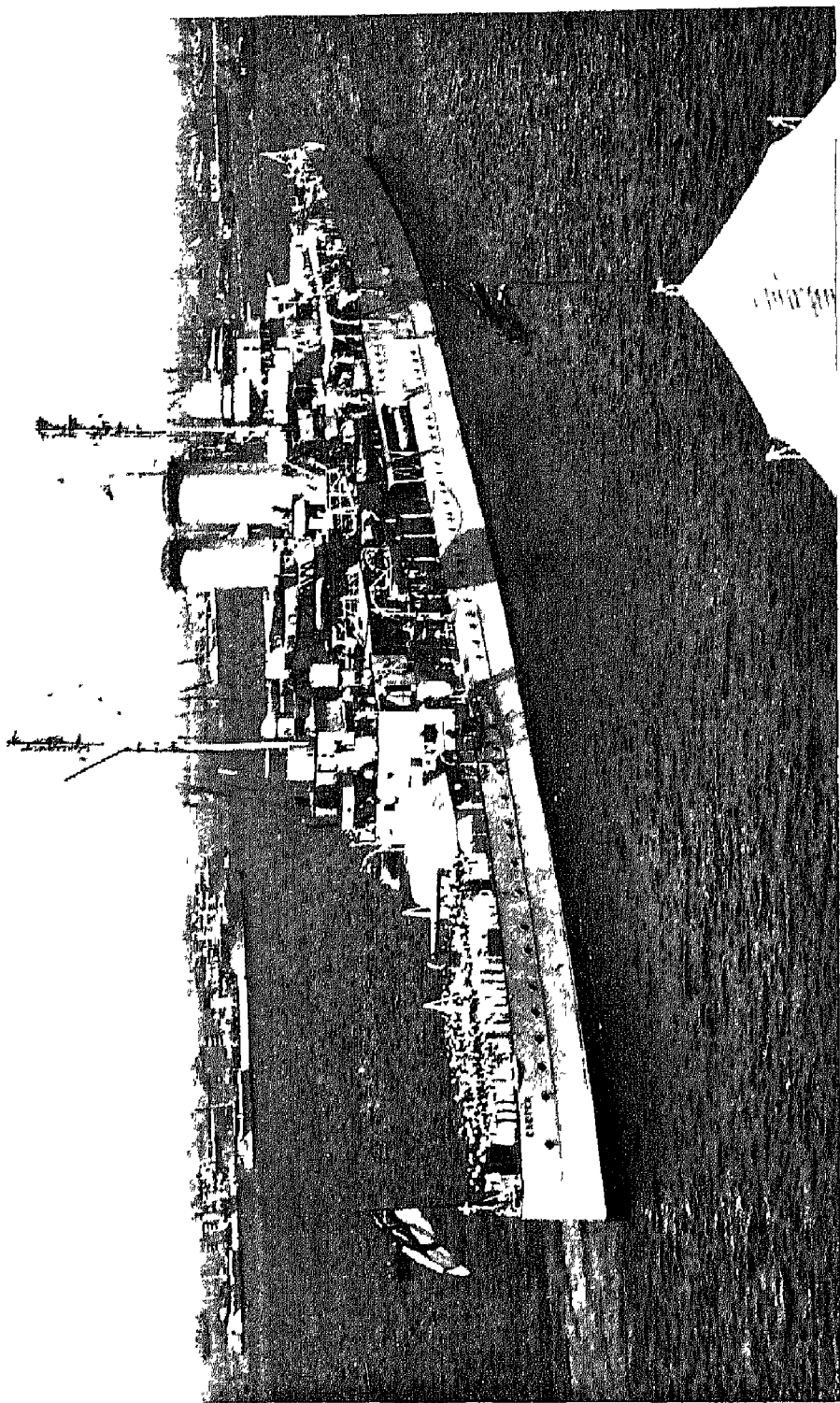
Some firing broke out at the start, together with a certain amount of close fighting. Some of the armed German guard jumped overboard and made their way to the shore over the ice, and opened fire, but they were soon silenced. The three hundred British prisoners who had for weeks been in durance vile down in the *Altmark*'s holds since their ships had been sunk by the *Graf Spee*, and who had been treated with the utmost harshness, were then released, and they came laughing and cheering up on

deck, the echoes rolling round the cold, snow-clad hills overlooking the fjord. Captain Vian then, after two of his officers had most gallantly jumped overboard to rescue a German seen struggling in the ice, cast off from the *Altmark* and brought his ship safely out, having incurred only very minor casualties. The Germans had some ten killed and wounded.

Next day, February 17th, the *Cossack* arrived at Leith, where the ship and the happy, released prisoners were wildly acclaimed. Some of the prisoners had to be detained in hospital before going to their homes, as a result of their treatment at Captain Dau's hands. Protestations to Britain for an infringement of neutrality followed from the Norwegian Government; the time was very shortly coming, however, when they would no longer desire to make protests. Captain Vian was awarded the D.S.O., and several other officers and men of the *Cossack* were honoured as a result of this brilliant naval occasion. In Germany there was great exasperation, more especially so because a big propaganda drive was alleged to have been arranged; this was to have included a march through the streets of Berlin of the three hundred British prisoners from the *Altmark*, the idea being to illustrate to the German populace the extent to which both the British Navy and mercantile marine had been driven off the seas; all this had now to be cancelled.

The torpedoing of the destroyer *Daring*, 1,375 tons, was announced by the Admiralty on February 20th, bringing the total of destroyer losses since the outbreak of war up to six. Nearly all hands were lost, the high percentage of casualties in many of H.M. ships sunk by mine or torpedo showing only too clearly the increasing explosive power of these weapons and the greater dangers which our sailors had to face. The losses of merchant shipping for the week ended February 17th were the heaviest of the war, being five British vessels, of 39,000 tons total, and fifteen neutrals, totalling 47,000 tons, making 86,000 tons in all. Of these, however, only one ship was sunk in convoy, and the large tonnage included the three big ships *Gretafeld*, *Sultan Star*, and *British Triumph*, already mentioned. It was becoming increasingly obvious that Germany was wishing all countries had only one head, so as to chop it off; anger in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Holland continued to rise, but the world had long since passed the stage where righteous indignation was of any avail; it was now a world of the sword. Warnings were given to neutrals by Germany not to accept navicerts.

Many British fishing vessels had by now, following the attacks made upon them by German aeroplanes, been armed for defence, and numerous



H EXETER

cases were reported of their beating off attacks by Heinkels. As regards enemy submarines, it was estimated that close on seventy, or roughly the number Germany had possessed at the beginning of the war, had been destroyed.

On February 27th, the French Ministry of Marine announced that a French destroyer had rammed and sunk a submarine. She had first dropped depth-charges on her after forcing her to dive; this damaged the submarine, which in turn was forced to rise again to the surface, whereupon the destroyer rammed her and finished her off. A huge stretch of oil, several miles long, marked its end. On the same day a small Norwegian steamer, the *Annfinn*, of 700 tons, unwittingly partly avenged the loss of so many of Norway's seamen by colliding with a U-boat in the hours of darkness, tearing off her periscope and herself sustaining so much damage that she sank. The crew of the *Annfinn* was taken off by a Danish vessel, and the submarine almost certainly went to the bottom.

With the capture by a British warship of the German *Wahehe*, 4,500 tons, while she was endeavouring to run the blockade from Vigo in Spain, the number of German vessels captured by the Allies amounted to twenty-five ships, totalling 98,000 tons. Twenty-eight other German vessels, totalling 153,000 tons, had scuttled themselves to avoid capture. These figures, of course, did not include the numerous German merchant vessels still sheltering helplessly in neutral ports, unable to reach Germany because of the blockade.

On February 27th the First Lord of the Admiralty addressed the House. He disclosed that H.M.S. *Nelson*—with the *Rodney*, Britain's heaviest and most formidable battleship, although fifteen years old, and carrying nine sixteen-inch guns and twelve six-inch—had been damaged by a magnetic mine early in December, but had managed to make port. H.M.S. *Barham*, 31,000 tons, and a much older ship, which had fought at Jutland, had also been damaged—by a torpedo—and reached port. Both ships would soon be ready for sea again. Five modern battleships of the *King George V* class, with great defence against under-water and air attack, would shortly be added to the fleet. Since the sinking of the *Royal Oak* on October 14th, Scapa Flow had not been used, and a great deal of otherwise unnecessary steaming had been obligatory, ships with oil-engines having been at sea for ninety days out of the 119 of the war. Mr. Churchill paid a great tribute to the engineering branch of the Royal Navy, and referred also to the "conquest" of the magnetic mine.

These mines, containing 700 lb. of high explosive and weighing 1,200 lb. in all, needed no mooring ropes, but lay on the bottom, and were detonated, not necessarily by contact, though this could be done, but through galvanic action, on a ship passing overhead and attracting a magnetic needle, which, on moving, released the necessary liquid to explode the charge. On the seaplanes first laying these mines in the shallow waters of the Thames Estuary on November 22nd, one, it now became known, fell on the seashore near Shoeburyness. Naval experts from the Mine Experimental Department at Portsmouth were at once sent for. On arrival at the scene, the party first stripped themselves of every particle of metal they might have on their clothing or in their pockets, then took paper rubbings of the mine's outside fittings, so as to enable special tools of non-ferrous material to be made. These tools were made in record time, and Lieutenant-Commander Ouvry, R.N., then volunteered to tackle the mine with these special tools, alone in the moonlight. He explained first to the party the exact parts he proposed to remove, and in what order, so that were he to be blown up, those who followed to deal with other and similar mines would know what to avoid. Greater devotion to duty, coupled with coolness and courage, would be difficult to find. In twelve hours from the start Lieutenant-Commander Ouvry had the mine rendered innocuous, and it was taken to Portsmouth by lorry for further dissection by the experts. On December 19th H.M. the King, while touring naval establishments at Portsmouth, decorated this officer with the D.S.O. Four other officers and men also received decorations. One of them, Chief Petty Officer Baldwin, was to lose his life very shortly whilst engaged on a similar hazardous task.

So much for the initial investigation of the magnetic mine. As a result of further research the "conquest" was beginning to be apparent by the end of February through the first fitting of ships, both large and small, both man-of-war and merchant vessel, with snakes of wire running completely round the hulls at upper-deck level. This wire had an electric current flowing through it, the effect of which was to demagnetize the field through which the ship was passing.

At the beginning of March, German exports of coal by sea to Italy became liable to detention by the British Contraband Control. This was in pursuance of the British Government's measure taken at the end of November to blockade German exports as a reprisal against the ruthless ignoring of international law by the U-boats. That the detention of

these Italian ships had not occurred before was due to the British Government having allowed a period of grace in an attempt to improve Anglo-Italian relations. On March 1st some twenty Italian ships were at Rotterdam, all laden with coal. Protests were lodged by the Italian Government, and finally the ships, after first being stopped, were allowed to proceed.

On March 2nd further air attacks were made on shipping on the east coast, an Italian ship, the *Mira*, 3,600 tons, being bombed and machine-gunned. Dutch ships were also attacked. Some trawlers were night-shelled by U-boats, and on the same night the British India steamer *Domala*, bound from Antwerp for India with 143 British Indian subjects who had been released by the German Government and were being repatriated, was savagely attacked with bomb and machine-gun by a German aeroplane in the English Channel. The attack took place in the light of a waning moon, four bombs being dropped, three of which struck her. The captain was killed, and fire broke out on board, as a result of which 108 people were reported missing and feared to have been drowned. A rough sea hindered the gallant rescue work of some British destroyers.

On March 4th an R.A.F. aeroplane dropped four bombs on a U-boat in Schillig Roads, Cuxhaven, scoring a direct hit between the conning-tower and the stern. She was believed destroyed. A similar and successful attack under almost identical circumstances took place a week later.

During the week ending March 3rd four German ships, totalling 18,500 tons, scuttled themselves to avoid capture; they were the *Wolfburg*, *Heidelberg*, *Troja*, and *Arucas*. The *Arucas*, which carried a valuable cargo of mercury, was one of six German merchant ships to break out of the port of Vigo in Spain during the past two weeks, and British sailors went to extreme risk to save the crew from the consequences of their own action. Of these six ships, three were captured by the Allied Navies, one scuttled herself, one was wrecked on an iceberg, and only one reached Germany in safety.

On March 7th the largest liner in the world, the 83,700-ton *Queen Elizabeth*, docked in New York harbour after completing her maiden voyage from the Clyde, which she had left in great secrecy. She was equipped with the magnetic-mine-detector device, and her safe arrival made a considerable impression throughout America. Her companion ship, the *Queen Mary*, was already in New York, and the two huge ships

saluted one another. A fortnight later the *Queen Mary* sailed from New York under sealed orders, though it was freely asserted in the press that her destination was Australia and her object the transport of further troops from there to the Near East.

Another Italian ship, the *Amelia Lauro*, 5,300 tons, was now made the object of a murderous night attack by a German aeroplane, in spite of the fact that the ship's name and flag had been brilliantly illuminated. The ship was sunk, two men being killed and several wounded. A passionate address was made later over the grave of the dead men by one of the Italian officers. But the master of the Italian people remained silent concerning the incident. More and more it was becoming apparent that sitting on the fence was a dangerous game, with forces in Italy pulling at him from each side and threatening to split him in twain on his uneasy seat. Ominously, on the same day as the bombing of the *Amelia Lauro*, the new 35,000-ton French battleship, *Jean Bart*, was launched.

A remarkable case of ill-luck dogging a British merchant vessel was recorded about this time. On February 18th the s.s. *Thurston*, 3,000 tons, carrying a crew of twenty-eight, was forced to put into Lisbon with her captain, second mate, and nine of her crew ill. The captain died in hospital there, and the ship started back to England under command of the first officer. She had not been long out, however, before she was in collision with the French collier *S.N.A.I.*, 2,700 tons. The *S.N.A.I.* sank, the *Thurston* picking up her crew only to founder herself shortly afterwards through striking a mine. The survivors from both ships numbered only four.

On the return to port of two fishing trawlers during the week-end March 9th/10th, it was learnt that they had had a duel with a U-boat with the defensive gun recently provided them. While fishing with their nets out, they were suddenly attacked by gun-fire from a German submarine, and in order to be free to fight their own guns, they were forced to cut adrift the nets, a loss involving each vessel in £100 or more. The two little trawlers then, keeping together, engaged the submarine furiously for fifteen minutes, at the end of which time the German, having sustained one hit and fearful of more, sheered off from these tough customers. During the action one of the crew of the trawlers was heard shouting to his comrades that they should emulate the deeds of the cruisers in the Battle of the Plate.

Two deliberate German bombing attacks now took place on the Outer

Dowsing lightship off the Norfolk coast. The crew of the lightship—and in maritime circles lightships have always been considered as sacred from attacks of war—being defenceless, could do nothing but crouch in the bows. The First Lord of the Admiralty announced shortly afterwards that where possible lightships would be replaced by lightfloats, which required no crews and would carry lights burning for two months unattended.

For the week ended March 10th five British ships, totalling 19,000 tons, were lost. Out of the four million tons of mercantile shipping Germany had possessed at the beginning of the war, $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. had been seized, 25 per cent. were bottled up in neutral ports, and the remaining $67\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. were rusting in German ports.

On March 13th the war between Russia and Finland came to an end, Finland, after a most gallant struggle, coming to terms with her enemy.

On March 14th, details were learnt of another extremely gallant fight between a trawler and a submarine, though in this case the former was an offensively armed naval trawler, and therefore a legitimate object of attack. While on patrol, this trawler's hydrophones located a submarine, and depth-charges were dropped on her, damaging her and causing her to rise to the surface. The submarine then manned her gun, the trawler doing likewise, and an engagement followed, during which the submarine worked up to a surface speed of $16\frac{1}{2}$ knots in order to escape back to Germany. The trawler, which had never exceeded 15 knots and was never meant to, in answer worked up to the truly astonishing speed of $18\frac{1}{2}$ knots, in spite of shell-holes that had partially flooded her engine-room. The engines trembled so violently with their unheard-of exertions, that it was feared the ship's bottom would drop out. The risk was worth it, however, for by these efforts the submarine was overhauled and sunk, with no survivors, the chief engineer of the trawler being subsequently decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross.

On the same day the German liner *Coruna*, 7,400 tons, scuttled herself in northern waters while on her way back to Germany on being intercepted by a British cruiser. On March 16th the Admiralty announced that non-service personnel would be granted monetary awards for information concerning the enemy's naval activity. This information money ranged from £1,000 for reports on movements of enemy ships down to £5 for first reports on mines, etc., washed ashore. The first claimant under this announcement was a woman, who earned £5 for reporting a torpedo washed on to the beach.

Attention was now turned by the German Air Force, after a somewhat long abstinence, on to Royal Naval ships anchored at Scapa Flow. One if not more of the raiders was shot down, and one British warship was damaged by a bomb and sustained seven casualties. One civilian was killed on the shore. In return German naval patrol vessels were bombed between Borkum and Heligoland by the R.A.F., and then an exceptionally fierce bombing attack was made on Hornum, the Nazi air base on Sylt. Bombing of British and Danish fishing boats was also reported.

A special gazette issued on March 21st contained the names of twenty-four Merchant Navy officers and ratings awarded decorations for bravery and devotion to duty. Amongst them were three stewardesses of the mined *Dunbar Castle*, who had shown great devotion to the wounded. The radio officer of the *Tairoa* also figured in the list for persisting in sending out radio calls for help when the pocket battleship *Graf Spee* was ordering him to stop and shelling him for not doing so. Some of the officers and men of the *San Alberto*, the ship that floated in half, were also included.

The attention of the British Government had of late become more and more occupied with the leakage in the Allied blockade, owing to German merchant vessels hugging the Norwegian shore, with its twists and turns, and keeping within Norwegian territorial waters to avoid capture—except between Norway and Denmark, where they had to swing out. This was particularly serious, because Germany was importing valuable cargoes of iron ore from Narvik in the extreme north of Norway for the purpose of making munitions; and on the evening of March 21st a British submarine, acting on instructions, intercepted and sank the German ship *Heddernheim*, 4,900 tons, after seeing that the crew were safe. The submarine first trailed the ship for miles, as, owing to the heavy sea running, it was not considered safe by the submarine's commander for the *Heddernheim's* crew to take to the boats until they had reached calmer waters. Three days later another German merchant vessel, the *Edmund Hugo Stinnes*, 2,200 tons, carrying coal from Hamburg to Copenhagen, was sunk by the submarine *Ursula* after the crew had been ordered to take to the boats; while *Ostpreussen*, 3,000 tons, bolted and ran ashore. British watch was also being kept on the Skager Rak, the alternative route for vessels bound from the north to Germany. The Germans at once took steps to lay mines in these waters to counteract British naval activity, and meanwhile ordered all their vessels to remain in port.

The week ended March 24th was the first week since the outbreak of

war in which no British merchant vessels were lost. Eight neutrals were, however, sunk. During this week the *Altmark*, minus her British prisoners, arrived back in Germany, a U-boat, lurking inshore, ran aground and was interned by the Norwegian Government, and British destroyers were reported as going inside the limit in their search for German merchant vessels. Protests, from Norway to England, from Germany to Norway, from Norway to Germany, flew swift as summer swallows.

Following complaints from representatives of the British Naval Intelligence that aliens, coming into England under the "smoke-screen" of refugees, were acting as spies, the Home Office on March 28th made an order that aliens should be prohibited from entering the docks in the Humber area at Hull, Immingham, and Grimsby; this order was to come into force immediately, with a likelihood of an extension being made to embrace the docks in the Thames and Clyde areas. In this manner the British kept faithful to their slogan: "What thou doest, do only by halves until it is all but too late."

Eight "emaciated Dutchmen," as Mr. Winston Churchill described them, were landed at the end of the month from the British submarine *Unity* after their fishing vessel had been bombed and sunk by a Nazi plane. They had first waved in greeting to the machine, only to be promptly attacked, and had then drifted six days in an open boat before being picked up. Mr. Churchill made this the occasion for pointed reference to the fact that neutrality was no defence against the tiger.

April opened with the resignation of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Chatfield from the post of Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence, a post that was not to be filled again. It was announced that Mr. Winston Churchill had been appointed head of the Committee of Service Ministers, and that he would remain at the Admiralty, provided the combined duties should not prove too onerous.

More convoy attacks by bombers were reported on April 4th, the attacks being beaten off by planes and the escorting ships' gun-fire. Next day the R.A.F. reconnoitred the naval base of Wilhelmshaven and some destroyers were attacked with bombs. If a further illustration of Nazi ruthlessness were wanted, it was provided on April 6th by the torpedoing of the Norwegian steamer *Navarra*, 2,100 tons. After the ship sank, early in the morning, the German submarine came to the surface and, approaching the lifeboat and men struggling in the water, flashed a light on to the scene. After watching it for some time, she moved off, leaving the men to their fate.

The storm brewing in Norwegian waters, with Norway futilely protesting first to one heavyweight and then to the other, gave its first rumbling burst on April 8th. In the Skager Rak three German vessels, the *Rio de Janeiro*, 5,200 tons, the *Posidonia*, 15,000 tons and one of Germany's biggest oil-tankers, and the *Kreta*, 2,300 tons, were torpedoed by British submarines. Infantry, cavalry, and airmen were on board the first-named vessel, and many perished. Further German troop concentrations were reported along the Baltic coast. At dawn three minefields were laid by the French and British Navies in Norwegian territorial waters at Vestfjord, Bud, and Stadtlandet, extending some eight to ten miles out to sea, the aim of the fields being to force German ships south-bound from Narvik with iron ore to turn out to sea at these points, and so run the risk of encountering units of the British Navy.

On April 9th the tattered gloves were finally thrown aside, and Germany invaded Norway in a series of swift strokes that from the start put her in possession of most of Norway's strategic bases, from Narvik in the north down to Oslo. She paid dearly for this, however, her naval losses being extraordinarily severe during the first fortnight, and her transports suffering heavily. British submarines in the Skager Rak and Kattegat, at last having their fling, had a "ghastly success," sinking no less than twenty-six supply and transport ships and torpedoing another ten, whose fate was not known. Eight thousand German soldiers were drowned, and nightmare scenes were witnessed as dead bodies floated round Oslo lighthouse. Vast quantities of arms and material went down as well.

Directly the invasion became known, strong forces of the British Home Fleet put out to engage the strong German forces that were covering the landing operations all up the Norwegian coast, but owing to weather conditions and the large area involved contact between heavy ships took place only between the battle-cruiser *Renown*, 32,000 tons, armed with six fifteen-inch guns and comparatively old, and the comparatively new and beautifully lined battleship *Scharnhorst*—she is often described as a battle-cruiser—26,000 tons, and armed with nine eleven-inch guns and twelve five-point-nines, and the heavy cruiser *Hipper*, 10,000 tons, and armed with eight eight-inch guns. *Renown* opened fire at 18,000 yards, and after three minutes the enemy replied. A heavy storm was raging, with snow-flurries—the action took place to the north of Narvik within the Arctic circle—and after nine minutes the *Renown* observed hits on the *Scharnhorst's* forward superstructure. Her whole armament then stopped

firing for a short period, and then the after turret began to fire under local control, which meant that the main central control was still out of order. To keep up with the *Scharnhorst* the *Renown* had to push up to twenty-four knots through very heavy seas, which were breaking right over her forward turrets; indeed, the action, short as it was, must have been a grimly inspiring spectacle. After a further short period of firing, a vertical column of smoke from another hit was observed on the *Scharnhorst*, which then turned away and retired at high speed, covered by the *Hipper*, which had thrown a smoke-screen across her wake and was herself firing broadsides at *Renown*. Firing finally ceased at the tremendous range of 29,000 yards.

The destroyer *Glow-worm*, 1,345 tons, one of the destroyers connected with the laying of the three minefields, lost a man overboard when starting back for home, and fell astern of the rest of her flotilla while picking him up. She then reported an unknown ship to the north of her, after which her wireless messages ceased, and it was evident she had encountered some greatly superior force and had been sunk. Certain units of the Home Fleet came in for severe bombing from the German Air Force, the battleship *Rodney*, biggest ship, with the *Nelson*, in the Navy, receiving a direct hit; but her strong armour resisted the impact, and she was not affected in any way. The destroyer *Gurkha*, however, which was hit, sank after keeping afloat over four hours. The German Air Force also attacked ships in Scapa Flow in successive waves, totalling sixty machines, without causing any damage but losing six of their aircraft.

On April 10th aircraft of the Fleet Air Arm attacked a German cruiser, which was found later to be the *Koeln*, 6,000 tons. One bomb struck her amidships, and flames one hundred feet high spurted up. In an hour she capsized and sank. The following day eighteen machines of the Fleet Air Arm attacked enemy ships in the harbour of Trondheim, and a destroyer was hit by an aerial torpedo. The Norwegians claimed the sinking of the battleship *Gneisenau*, sister ship to the *Scharnhorst*, by fire from coastal batteries, but this was not substantiated, and the ship turned out to be the heavy 10,000-ton cruiser *Bluecher*. The *Bluecher* was sunk while forcing her way up the Oslo Fjord, being first struck by shore batteries and then mines. She went down extremely rapidly with most of the crew. In her also went to the bottom the Admiral of the invading German fleet and the General and headquarters staff of the invading army. It must be pointed out, however, that the *Bluecher* was possibly sunk by the British submarine *Salmon* in December, and that the vessel

in question may have been another and older one. By this time doubt also existed as to whether the pocket battleship *Deutschland* had been sunk or not. Two further German losses were the cruiser *Karlsruhe*, torpedoed and sunk off Kristiansand by the British submarine *Truant*, and the cruiser *Emden*.

By far the biggest stand-up battles between small craft during these operations took place in the Narvik Fjord, far to the north, the first taking place on April 10th, the second on April 13th. In the case of the first, Captain Warburton-Lee of *Hardy*, in command of the 2nd destroyer flotilla, the *Hardy*, *Hunter*, *Hotspur*, *Hostile*, and *Havoc*, led his ships into action up the fjord after receiving an Admiralty message stating he should be the sole judge as to whether he attacked the enemy vessels which were known to be up at the head of the fjord ; these consisted of several of Germany's latest destroyers, together with six or eight merchant ships which had been acting as supply ships to the troops they had recently brought up and landed in secret at Narvik.

The 2nd destroyer flotilla encountered nothing in the thirty-mile-long fjord till they reached the harbour of Narvik. Inside it were three enemy destroyers and six merchant vessels. The flotilla attacked, sank one of the destroyers by torpedo, set the other two on fire, and sank by torpedo all six merchant ships. While the flotilla was preparing to steam into the harbour for yet another attack on the two remaining destroyers that had been damaged, five more large destroyers came into view from adjoining inlets, and a hot action ensued, as a result of which the *Hardy* was badly damaged and beached, Captain Warburton-Lee being severely wounded, to die a little later, and everybody in the wheel-house being killed. Captain Warburton-Lee's secretary, Paymaster-Lieutenant Stanning, though wounded, took the wheel and then command of the ship until she was run ashore. The *Hunter* was torpedoed and sank with the majority of her crew, and the *Hotspur* was severely damaged. The *Hostile* and *Havoc* covered the damaged *Hotspur* during the withdrawal from the fjord, but the five German destroyers had been too badly mauled to pursue them farther, and on the way out the three surviving British destroyers met the ammunition ship *Rauenfels* coming in, the *Havoc* promptly blowing her up.

On April 13th a further attack was made on Narvik Fjord to finish off the German units there and engage the coastal batteries which the Germans had by then erected near the town of Narvik. This time the old *Warspite*, veteran of Jutland, in which battle she was twice subjected to

the concentrated gun-fire of the van of the German High Seas Fleet, owing to her turning twice unavoidably towards them, supported nine British destroyers going ahead of her with minesweepers. The *Warspite's* displacement was 30,000 tons, and she carried eight fifteen-inch guns and eight six-inch. She had been reconditioned in 1934 at a cost of three million pounds, and was commanded by Captain Crutchley, V.C. Admiral Whitworth was in charge of the force as a whole, flying his flag in *Warspite*.

On the way up the long fjord one enemy destroyer was encountered and sunk ; six other destroyers then appeared from various inlets, and a dog-fight ensued, the German vessels retreating all the time. Two of these were destroyed, and the remaining four fled up a side fjord, the Rombaks Fjord, which is to the east of Narvik. While *Warspite* then, with *Cossack* of *Altmark* fame and *Punjabi* and *Foxhound*, engaged the shore batteries, the remaining six British destroyers, with *Eskimo* leading, went up the narrow Rombaks Fjord to find the four German vessels that had tried to escape. One was encountered half-way up and was finished off by *Eskimo*, but she received damage herself and had to retire, leaving her five consorts to proceed on up to the head of the neck of water. On arrival there they found the three remaining German destroyers wrecked and deserted save for one wounded officer, who was taken prisoner. The operations had ended with no less than seven German destroyers sunk or wrecked in one day, with no total loss to the British—a really spectacular success.

The force, including the *Warspite*, then withdrew, leaving the destroyers *Ivanhoe* and *Kimberley* in possession of the fjord. That night the *Ivanhoe* rescued the 170 survivors of the beached *Hardy*, who had managed to reach the shore in the bitter cold and find shelter in a village. It was at first thought that all hands of the torpedoed *Hunter* had perished, but later it was found that some fifty had managed to reach northern Sweden after crossing Norway.

The next stage in the naval war was the laying of a vast minefield by the Royal Navy in the Kattegat and Skager Rak to prevent and hamper the crossing of transports. Steps, of course, were immediately taken by the Germans to begin sweeping them up. The next success against the German Navy was the torpedoing by H.M. Submarine *Spearfish* of the pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer*, though it was not thought she sank. The next day it was announced that the submarine *Thistle*, a sister ship of the *Truant*, that sank the *Karlsruhe*, was considerably overdue and must

therefore be presumed lost. On April 15th it was learnt that the Allies had sent an expeditionary force, which had been landed at several points on the Norwegian coast. On April 17th naval units heavily bombarded Stavanger aerodrome, which was being used as a German air base, for eighty minutes. On April 20th an Admiralty communiqué stated that intermittent air attacks on British naval units and transports had occurred during the past few days, increasing in intensity.

By now, up to April 22nd, Germany's *known* losses in warships, exclusive of those damaged or whose loss had been concealed, consisted of one pocket battleship, one heavy cruiser, six cruisers, eleven destroyers, and some eighty submarines. These amounted to over one-third of her entire Navy, and, except for the submarines, the vast majority were directly due to the Norwegian campaign.

The R.A.F. made harassing attacks on German transports and supply ships, the attacks being particularly heavy near Bergen on April 26th. Attacks were also made on German war vessels in Trondheim Fjord. On the other side of the picture, the German Air Force, particularly because its bases were so much closer to the scene of operations, were making matters more and more unpleasant for the troops and ships and escorting vessels of the British and French Expeditionary Forces.

From the cold waters of Norway attention was now attracted to the warm blue of the Mediterranean through an attitude on the part of the Italian Government-controlled press and of Italy's statesmen that could not be ignored, so pointed was its intrusion. The British Government therefore announced at the end of April that as a precautionary measure British shipping which normally passed through the Mediterranean would be diverted round the Cape. This had been done once before at the outbreak of the war, but owing to the Italian attitude at the time the precaution had been waived. A battle fleet of French and British warships was also reported to be in the eastern Mediterranean on its way to Alexandria.

In the last week of April two more British submarines, the *Tarpon* and *Sterlot*, were announced as being considerably overdue, and could be considered as lost with all hands. To this melancholy news there came tidings of a further loss, that of the minelaying 1,500-ton submarine *Seal*. The naval trawlers *Bradman* and *Cape Siretoko* were sunk as a result of bombing attacks, but there was no loss of life. As regards the numbers of merchant vessels lost, the Admiralty stated that in future, in order to avoid giving the enemy any possible helpful information, the figures for

these would be published every twelve days instead of weekly as heretofore, and that then no details would be given in the way of names and individual tonnages of ships sunk.

April closed with the crashing towards midnight on the last day of the month of a German minelaying seaplane on the town of Clacton-on-Sea, the crew of four being killed. Two civilians were killed, and about one hundred and fifty were injured. The machine burst into flames and the mine or mines it was carrying exploded. Considering that these magnetic mines, as has been described, weigh as much as a very heavy bomb, it was fortunate that the civilian deaths were limited to two.

May opened with something of a shock for the British public. Some apprehension had already been felt over the positions held by British forces in Norway south of Narvik, and on Thursday, May 2nd, it was announced in the House of Commons by the Prime Minister that all the Allied forces south of Trondheim had been withdrawn. Their positions had indeed been rendered largely untenable by the fact that all aerodromes in this part of the country and all ground that was of any possible use for this purpose were already in enemy hands. Nevertheless, Mr. Chamberlain pointed out the balance of advantage was definitely with the Allies.

Owing to treachery, long preparation, and Fifth Column activities, Germany had expected more or less a walk-over in Norway as she had achieved in Denmark. But Norway had remained unconquered, and heavy losses had been sustained by the enemy which far outweighed those of the Allies. In three weeks, apart from military and air losses, two German capital ships were damaged, certainly three, and possibly four, cruisers were sunk, in addition to eleven destroyers, with five U-boats. Thirty transport and store ships had been sunk, scuttled, or set on fire, with a loss of several thousand lives and much material, and a further ten transports and store ships had been struck by torpedoes and probably sunk.

In the same period of three weeks the Royal Navy had lost four destroyers, three submarines, one sloop (the H.M.S. *Bittern* announced on May 2nd, a ship of 1,190 tons under the command of Captain Mills, which was set on fire by attack from the air). Five other warships had been damaged by air attack, and one store ship had been sunk by U-boat torpedo.

From these figures, Mr. Chamberlain declared "the strength and efficiency of the Royal Navy had been little, if at all, affected; the injury to the German Navy had been so substantial as to alter the entire balance of naval power."

This withdrawal from southern Norway permitted a reorientation of the Allied fleets in the Mediterranean, which had been somewhat depleted by Norwegian requirements. The British mercantile shipping had already again been diverted from the Mediterranean route, owing to the weakening of the fleets there and the consequent difficulties in supplying ships for convoy. It therefore mitigated the disappointment at the Norwegian news to learn that "a British and French battle fleet, with cruisers and auxiliary craft, is already in the eastern basin of the Mediterranean on its way to Alexandria." Meantime, it was at least some satisfaction to learn the next day that the Allied troops had been withdrawn from the Trondheim area in ships of the Navy without the loss of a single man; at the same time considerable pleasure was expressed in Egypt at the arrival of naval reinforcements. Italy, on the other hand, regarded it as a "menacing movement," and became even more wordily hostile than she had previously been. Italian papers chose to overlook the immense losses inflicted on the German forces both by the Navy itself and the Fleet Air Arm. They ignored the fact that there were no convenient air bases available for Allied use, and maintained that Britain had been ignominiously defeated and would shortly be subject to German invasion.

May was only a week old when (on the 7th) came news of the sinking of three Allied destroyers operating in Norwegian waters—one British, one French, and one Polish. The British ship was H.M.S. *Afridi*, commanded by Captain Vian, D.S.O., of *Cossack* fame, which had been providing defence for the troop convoy against aircraft and submarine attack. With the arrival of daylight, repeated waves of enemy aircraft kept up an incessant attack on the convoy, but the barrage maintained by the anti-aircraft guns of the escort was so effective that the troop transports were untouched. It was in this operation that H.M.S. *Afridi* was struck by bombs and subsequently sank, but in the meantime she had succeeded in bringing down two enemy aircraft. Captain Vian was, fortunately, among those saved. The French *Bison* and the Polish *Grom* were the other victims of this episode.

Afridi had stayed behind to cover the withdrawal of the convoy and pick up any men who had remained on shore. Thirty-nine enemy planes came over, and five attacks were made. *Afridi* was continuously blazing away at them when she was finally struck, but not before, it was said, some five hundred bombs had been aimed at her.

At this time, too, came information that the German transport ship the *Robert Lee*, originally the "strength-through-joy" pleasure cruiser, of 27,000 tons, had been sunk.

Merchant shipping losses for the month of April were also announced, and amounted to only 18,249 tons. For the week ended April 28th only four British ships, of a total tonnage of 6,689, one Allied ship of 1,458 tons, and two neutrals, totalling 298 tons, were lost. On the other hand, world tonnage totalling 41,677 was sunk by German action in the same time. Up to May 1st, 19,098 merchant ships had been convoyed by the British Navy, of which thirty-one, or 1 in 616, had been lost through enemy action, and 3,457 ships had been convoyed by the French Navy, with a loss of only seven.

It was also officially stated that from the outbreak of war until the end of March 576,000 tons of goods were seized by the British Contraband Control, of which 558,800 tons would go before the Prize Court, the remaining 17,800 tons having been released. Among the seizures were 196,000 tons of base metals, 135,000 tons of petroleum products, and 27,000 tons of textiles.

It is interesting to observe that about 95 per cent. of these goods were detained before the end of December. By that time no more cargoes were manifested for Germany, and the operations of the blockade had frightened most of the contraband traffic off the seas.

At this time a great political storm blew up in the House of Commons. A considerable amount of discontent over the prosecution of the war had been expressed by the Opposition Parties, and even a number of Government supporters had been demanding much greater effort from the Government. After a two-day debate in Parliament it became clear that there was a large element of malcontents who were clamouring for a real National Government, whose members should be selected on a basis of merit rather than party, so that the war efforts of the nation might be prosecuted with the utmost vigour and the whole energy of the entire population. During the debate in the Commons Admiral Sir Roger Keyes sharply criticized the Government for what he considered lack of naval enterprise, "a shocking story of ineptitude which was following the tragedy of Gallipoli" in connexion with Trondheim. He had, he told the House, himself offered to lead a naval raiding expedition, but was ignominiously turned down by the Admiralty. As Mr. Churchill, the First Lord, subsequently explained, various alternative proposals to this effect had been considered, and some were believed to be superior to that of Sir Roger Keyes, but, after weighing every pro and con, it had been decided that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages of any such expedition.

A number of Conservatives even went so far as to vote against the existing Government, and in spite of everything he could think of to stiffen it up, the Prime Minister eventually decided to resign in favour of Mr. Winston Churchill, who, alone among Ministers, had, as First Lord of the Admiralty, captured the public imagination and admiration.

Meantime, another and even greater storm which had been blowing up for some time burst over Europe. The Low Countries of Holland and Belgium and the Duchy of Luxemburg were invaded without warning by Germany, and the whole aspect of European affairs was altered. Fortunately a large proportion of the Dutch mercantile marine was away from Dutch territorial waters and had been warned against entry into certain ports. In spite of treachery and German Fifth Column activities, the Dutch navy and mercantile fleet were consequently enabled to free themselves from enemy shackles. German ships which had been sheltering for safety in the Dutch Indies were taken over by the new Allies, and considerable mercantile addition to the Allied cause was recorded. Nevertheless, treachery and Fifth Column activities were rendering conditions impossible for the Dutch defences on land. Rotterdam and other seaports were infested with parachutists and their friends, including both traitorous Dutchmen and enemy agents who had previously been placed there in large numbers, aerodromes were captured, and in spite of strenuous activity on the part of the loyal Dutch Navy, it was becoming clear that many vital positions in Holland were rapidly becoming untenable. While the British and French Cabinets were being reshuffled and strengthened, Germany was playing havoc with the Low Countries; while British and French forces were being rushed to the help of their new Allies, traitors were betraying their countries to the enemy. On May 13th the Admiralty announced that—

“Since the German invasion of Holland and Belgium strong naval forces have been operating continuously off the coast of these two countries, in spite of repeated bombing attacks having been made on them. Allied operations on land have been supported. Enemy troops landing from the air on aerodromes and beaches have been bombarded. Refugees have been evacuated from the war area and brought to this country.”

On May 9th it was announced by the Admiralty that further submarine successes had been achieved. In an attack on one convoy of ten enemy

ships six torpedoes found their mark. Three hits were made on another convoy, and two on a third. One ship sailing independently was torpedoed and sunk, and another was driven ashore and destroyed by gun-fire and torpedo. All ignorant of political strife and anxieties at home, the Navy was carrying on in the traditional manner of that force.

Meantime, Russia was showing signs of nervousness, and some apprehension was felt as to whether her Black Sea ports were sufficiently strong to withstand any possible attack by Allied fleets in the Mediterranean and Allied forces in the Near East—at that time under the command of General Weygand. Naval laboratories were consequently transferred from Sebastopol to Odessa, and the inhabitants along the northern and eastern coasts of the Black Sea were urged to move inland. Under the supervision of German engineers, it was reported, Russia began to strengthen her fortifications, and the Black Sea submarine fleet was considerably increased.

At the same time it was announced that the British had occupied Iceland to preserve the peace of that country from the possible ravages of German invasion, a move which was heartily welcomed by the inhabitants of that country.

With news of the death of Commander Robert Rule Graham, who won the D.S.O. in connexion with the *Exeter's* attack on the *Graf Spee*, and who was killed while serving in the French destroyer *Bison*, came also the announcement that H.M.S. *Seal*, a British submarine (Commander Lonsdale), was overdue and must be presumed lost.

On the other hand, in an attempt to disembark troops in the south of the Tromsøe province, several German transports were sunk and the forces which had landed were surrounded. In addition to this, a German transport, believed to be the *Campinas*, of 4,541 tons, struck a mine and sank between Denmark and Sweden, and a second, the *Amhalt*, of 5,870 tons, went ashore in the same waters, but was refloated.

On May 13th Mr. Churchill made his first speech in the House of Commons as Prime Minister, and not only received a great ovation on taking his seat, but received a unanimous vote of confidence in his new Government. In a speech which must inevitably go down in history as one of the great orations of the world, he said :

“ We are in the preliminary phase of one of the greatest battles in history, that we are in action at many other points, in Norway and in Holland, that we have to be prepared in the Mediterranean,

that the air battle is continuous, and that many preparations have to be made at home. . . . I have nothing to offer but blood and toil and tears and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many long months of struggle and of suffering. . . . If you ask us 'What is our aim?', I can answer in one word—Victory. . . . I take up my task in buoyancy and hope. I feel that our cause will not be allowed to fail among men. I feel entitled, at this juncture and at this time, to claim the aid of all, and I say, 'Come, then, let us go forward together in our united strength.' "

On this day too, Queen Wilhelmina, whom the Germans had been strenuously trying to kidnap, was brought to England in a British warship. It had been her firm intention never to leave Dutch soil while fighting was proceeding. It had, however, become clear that wherever she went, the Germans, with the help of traitors, attempted to surround her with a view to capture. She was consequently induced to alter her decision and seek safety in England. The following day her Cabinet also reached London.

The next day came the announcement that Germany had lost thirty-one ships, of a total tonnage of 171,049, during the previous week. These included twenty-one seized by the Dutch in the East and West Indies. This brought the total of German mercantile tonnage known to have been sunk or captured to approximately 625,000 tons, while ships of a further 165,000 tons, whose names had not been ascertained, had also been sunk by Allied action. Unfortunately, now came news that the Dutch Commander-in-Chief had, largely owing to treachery and Fifth Column activity, been compelled to order the "cease fire" in Holland. It was, however, stated that fighting was still continuing in Zeeland, and that the order did not apply to the Dutch Navy, which, fortunately, was fairly powerful, and which, even more fortunately, was mainly able to get in touch with Allied fleets. Including ships in the East, its strength comprised four cruisers, eight destroyers, twenty-one submarines, ten torpedo-boats, and a considerable number of miscellaneous warships, such as escort vessels, gunboats, mine-layers, and mine-sweepers. Altogether, the reinforcements to the Allied naval and mercantile fleets amounted to about 3,000,000 tons gross, which was more than double the 1,300,000 tons of Allied shipping that had been sunk by the Germans since the beginning of the war.

Nevertheless, Germany continued to make fantastic claims as to the sinking of British ships. Two cruisers and one destroyer were sunk off the Dutch coast—on paper. A 25,000-ton steamer was set on fire—on paper—and an 8,000-ton one badly damaged by bombs, and several other naval units were accounted for in Norwegian waters—on paper. In view of the frequent sinking of naval ships which steadfastly remained afloat, the enemy were perhaps wise to refrain from specifying more clearly these vessels.

It is interesting here to record that, in spite of all the enemy's efforts, British overseas exports and imports were rapidly and substantially increasing, the figures for April 1940 as compared with April 1939 being : imports, £109,986,000, as against £70,049,000, while exports were valued at £48,300,000, compared with £35,149,000.

It now became evident that the new British Government were beginning to speed up in all directions, and intended to prosecute the war with far greater vigour than had previously been evidenced. The manufacture of munitions of all kinds was to be pushed on with the utmost celerity, women were to be trained for factory work, Labour Party Ministers in the Government were appealing successfully for greater efforts by trade unionists, and as Mr. Hugh Dalton, the new Minister of Economic Warfare, said, "The weapons of economic warfare must be applied with their full force."

At this point it was possible to gauge the comparative gains and losses of the belligerents in shipping, as a result of the enemy rape of Scandinavia and the Low Countries. Compared with the position in September, there had been a net gain of over 7,000,000 tons resulting from the invasion of Norway, Belgium, and the Netherlands. At the beginning of the war the mercantile fleets were as follows :

	<i>Gross Tonnage</i>
British Empire	21,215,261
Norway	4,834,902
Netherlands	2,972,871
France	2,952,975
Belgium	408,418
Poland	121,680
	<hr/>
	32,506,107
	<hr/>

These figures take no account of new British ships completed since the war started, nor of Danish and other neutral ships trading on Allied account. Moreover, owing to the extensive sinkings of U-boats and raiders, shipping losses had for some little time become comparatively negligible. The position of our mercantile fleet was therefore far more favourable than could possibly have been expected. Meanwhile, the British blockade of Germany was rendered in some respects easier by the inclusion of so many additional western European ports within the war zone, and the fact that imports from overseas could no longer reach Germany from Dutch and Belgian ports. In spite of material gains resulting to the enemy from her overrunning of Denmark, southern Norway, and large parts of the Low Countries, there is no doubt that she was losing a large proportion of her potential necessary imports from overseas.

Italy, by the same token, was becoming increasingly irritated at the Allied naval strength in the Mediterranean, where joint manœuvres on a vast scale were being carried out, and at their very successful control of contraband. Her press was being worked up into even greater frenzies against Great Britain and France, and demonstrations against them were being organized in the streets and public places. But with the uncertainty in the Duce's mind as to which way the war was really going, she continued to sit firmly on the fence in the bellicose attitude of a Humpty Dumpty and, like Humpty Dumpty, she seemed to have every prospect of a very great fall.

News now came that the enemy had succeeded in laying a mincfield round the Cape off Cape Agulhas, about one hundred miles south-east of Capetown. The fortunate accident of two of the mines colliding and exploding led to its discovery, and it was consequently able to be swept clear before any damage had been done to the large amount of shipping that might have been using this route.

At this time too (May 18th) came news that the beautiful Zeeland Islands had been evacuated by the Dutch, but not before immense damage had been done by the Dutch and Allied Navies. In face of intensive air bombardment, not only had the Queen, the Royal Family, and the Dutch Government been brought to safety, but motor torpedo-boats had dashed into the Zuider Zee and wrought much havoc, minefields had been laid, oil dumps destroyed, and the port of Ymuiden to the west of Amsterdam had been rendered useless by the sinking of a block ship.

There were two instances of special financial and commercial interest

recorded in connexion with these activities. In the first of these, it was stated that the Dutch gold had been taken to a place of safety by ships of the Royal Navy. In the second, a Dutch diamond merchant returned to the enemy-infested Amsterdam, the home of the diamond industry, rescued diamonds of enormous value, and got back safely to the British ship which was waiting ready to carry him back to England. Thus, after so short a time, the marvellous organization and ruthless methods of an enemy resolved to conquer at all costs, regardless of the rules of warfare and taking every advantage of treachery and long-planned infiltration, had completely overrun Holland. But a vitally important lesson had been learned by the Allies, as a consequence of which they were aroused as to the possibilities of there being traitors and extensive enemy activities within their own shores, where thousands of refugees had been welcomed from Nazi rule. Internment of aliens who might possibly be hostile, curfew regulations for others, and the rounding up of their own nationals who might be engaged in political subversion were therefore seriously taken in hand.

On May 21st it was announced that the British destroyer *Whitley*, of 1,100 tons, built in 1918, was damaged by bombs and subsequently beached. H.M.S. *Whitley* was a sister ship of H.M.S. *Valentine*, which was beached in exactly similar circumstances the previous week. Both were in use as escort vessels after having been refitted and re-armed. Later the same day came the announcement that the British cruiser H.M.S. *Effingham* (Captain Howson) had hit an uncharted rock off the coast of Norway and had sunk. *Effingham* was a ship of 9,550 tons, completed in 1925 and reconstructed in 1938. She carried a complement of 712-749, and there were fortunately no casualties. The mine-layer *Princess Victoria*, a former Irish Channel packet, was also sunk by mine, and two officers and thirty-one men lost their lives.

By now the German advance on land towards the Channel ports was becoming a serious menace to the Allied Armies. Naval activities in these zones were consequently on the increase. Not only had our ships to guard the seas and avenues of supplies to the B.E.F. but they were beginning to take a more active part in the actual warfare by shelling enemy positions from the sea and to repeat the activities off the Belgian and French coasts that they had successfully carried out in Norway. Thus, while the Germans were devastating peaceful villages with fire and sword, the naval guns were pounding away at enemy armoured divisions. While engaged in these operations the destroyer *Wessex*, 1,100 tons, was

sunk as a result of enemy air attack, with the loss of six ratings killed and fifteen wounded.

In the midst of these, the most intensive war operations in the history of the world, when the Allied Armies were in serious plight from the over-running of Flanders by enemy motorized and heavy tank divisions, came a devastating blow. The King of the Belgians had made terms with the enemy, and thereby exposed the whole of the Allies' left flank to the ravages of the German hordes.

This announcement was made public by the French Premier, M. Reynaud, over the Paris wireless at 8.30 a.m. on May 28th, in most impressive words. The French people, he said, could no longer count on the support of the Belgian Army. Since four that morning the French and British Armies in the north had been fighting alone.

When, after the breach in the French front on May 14th, the German forces divided the Allied Armies into two groups, the northern group, under the command of General Blanchard, consisted of the Belgian Army, the B.E.F., and some French divisions. It was provisioned via Dunkirk, which was defended to the north by the Belgians. On the order of King Leopold the Belgian Army had now suddenly and unconditionally capitulated, opening the road to Dunkirk to the Germans.

That King, who, eighteen days before, had appealed for Allied help, had now, without any warning to the Allied forces, laid down his arms. This was a deed without precedent in history.

On the same day the British Premier made a similar announcement when he informed the House of Commons that the King of the Belgians "yesterday sent a plenipotentiary to the German Command" asking for a suspension of arms on the Belgian front. The British and French Governments instructed their generals immediately to dissociate themselves from this proceeding and to "persevere in the operations upon which they are now engaged."

"The situation of the British and French Armies, now engaged in a most severe battle and beset on three sides from the air, is evidently extremely grave. The surrender of the Belgian Army in this manner adds appreciably to their grievous peril. But the troops are in good heart and are fighting with the utmost discipline and tenacity. I shall, of course, abstain from giving any particulars of what, with the powerful assistance of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, they are doing, or hope to

do. I expect to make a statement to the House on the general position when the result of the intense struggle now going on can be known and measured. This will not, perhaps, be until the beginning of next week.

"Meanwhile, the House should prepare itself for hard and heavy tidings. I have only to add that nothing which may happen in this battle can in any way relieve us of our duty to defend the world cause to which we have vowed ourselves; nor should it destroy our confidence in our power to make our way, as on former occasions in our history, through disaster and through grief to the ultimate defeat of our enemies."

The Belgian Government quickly repudiated the action of their King and his authority for taking such action. Its members had urged strongly against it, and they were supported by Belgian Labour organizations and sections of the Army. None the less, hard and heavy tidings, as Mr. Churchill called them, were to be expected. Clearly the Channel ports must be lost, and on any reasonable anticipation the British Expeditionary Force and the French troops fighting at their side, surrounded by the enemy, must be decimated. Nothing but a miracle could save them. But a man-made miracle was there. The British and French Navies were co-operating with the Allied air and land forces. Powerful aid came from Admiral Abrial, with a large number of French ships. Positions were shelled, forts defended from the sea, and supplies were landed. The Royal Navy at the same time was also giving all possible help and support to the British and French land forces operating in the vicinity of the French and Belgian coasts. Warships inflicted considerable punishment on the German advance forces with their covering fire, during which the destroyers *Grafton*, *Grenade*, and *Wakeful* were lost, as well as certain small auxiliary craft.

Meanwhile, troops and wounded were being brought off the shell-pitted beach of Dunkirk in their thousands. After the capitulation of Holland on May 14th the Admiralty had issued an order calling for return to be made of all self-propelled craft in the United Kingdom between thirty and a hundred feet long, with the object of supplementing in-shore patrol duties. Many of these vessels were pressed into the service of rescue work. By day and by night craft of every conceivable kind that could help in the shallow waters of Dunkirk were crossing and recrossing the Channel, so that its traffic almost resembled the rush hour

in Piccadilly or the Strand on a wet day. British and French soldiers, wearied by days and nights of heavy battle and endless marching under constant aerial attack, were being brought back in tens, in hundreds, and in thousands. Trainload after trainload was to be seen thundering through from south-coast ports, taking them to rest and refreshment. Railway men vied with those in the Navy, Merchant Service, and volunteer craft in their ceaseless work. As day succeeded day, it began to be hoped that the "hard and heavy tidings" which the Prime Minister had warned us to expect were becoming less likely. As May merged into June it became probable that the vast bulk of our gallant Expeditionary Force and their brave Allies in Flanders would be saved, as saved they were by their own indomitable courage and that of the Royal Air Force and by the ever-watchful, ever-ready aid of the Royal Navy and its amateur assistants.

As June burst upon us in the glorious sunshine of an English summer day, it was learned that more than four-fifths of our forces were saved, and that, whereas it had been hoped that perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 would be rescued from the jaws of death, no fewer than 335,000 had already been brought safely to England. Thus drew to an end an epic triumph of naval, military, and air co-operation.

CHAPTER 3

THE WAR IN THE AIR

BY AIR-COMMODORE L. E. O. CHARLTON, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

THE air history of the period under review in this chapter, from December 1st, 1939, to May 31st, 1940, may be conveniently divided into four parts. Firstly, there is the Russo-Finnish War, marked throughout by a lively air activity, which commenced on the last day of November and ended on March 12th. Secondly, we have the Norwegian campaign, including the protracted Narvik operations which were still continuing as our period closed, and which was opened with the full force of surprise on April 9th. Thirdly, there was Herr Hitler's main offensive, commenced on May 10th, the preliminary phase of which concluded with the stirring episode of Dunkirk and which continued with the gigantic Nazi drive against the Weygand Line across the breadth of Northern France, the result of which was indeterminate as this was being written. Fourthly, there remain for consideration the various activities of the Royal Air Force, the French *Armée de l'Air*, and the Nazi-German *Luftwaffe*, over their opposing lines, across the North Sea, and far into each other's territories, which formed a continuous interplay of air power, notwithstanding the Norwegian interlude, until Herr Hitler's great offensive focused almost all endeavour on the actual battle fronts or on rear targets in direct relation with that momentous struggle.

At the time that Finland was invaded by her powerful neighbour, seeking to redress a wholly imaginary wrong, the air power of that thinly populated State was commensurate with that of her military force on land, and consequently feeble. It probably amounted to some three hundred aircraft altogether, for the most part of obsolescent British type, exclusive of a few Avro "Ansons" and Bristol "Blenheims," with a sprinkling of Fokkers for both bombing and pursuit. Against this inconsiderable force the vast air power of the Soviet Union was arrayed, computed at not less than 4,000 first-line aircraft, with equivalent reserves, and with a national capacity for further output which placed that country beyond the reach of scarcity however large her losses.

It is true that during the three and a half months of unequal struggle the Finnish Air Force did receive, from time to time, slight aircraft reinforcement from Great Britain, the U.S.A., and Italy. But this did little more than replace wastage, and was never potent to exercise much more than a moral effect. Nevertheless, Finland duplicated in the air the heroic resistance of her forces on the ground, continuing to bomb and battle with the small means at her disposal until the midnight signing of the Peace Treaty on March 12th, and taking a severe toll of her well-armed adversary whenever their opposing forces met in the sky. At the end of the first ten weeks of war, for instance, Finland could claim 327 hostile aircraft, a considerable proportion of which had fallen in combat, while the rest were victims of an always well-directed fire from the ground.

Her rule of conduct was to attack military objectives only from the air, not so much, strictly speaking, from humanitarian motives as for the obvious necessity to avoid dissipation of force, and to concentrate all available energy on the various fronts of battle or immediately to rearward. By this policy the Finnish bombers wrought considerable mischief on the enemy's services of supply, and added greatly to their losses, though they were powerless to affect the general situation and were as gnat stings in comparison with the death-dealing visitations of the Soviet bombing aircraft.

For the general rule of Russian conduct in the air was different and consisted of indiscriminate bombing over the length and breadth of Finland until not a single town was left unvisited, not excepting those few which were hospital centres and plainly showed the symbols of the Red Cross. In comparison with the ferocity of intent, and the perpetual activity of the Russian bombers, the civilian mortality was, on the whole, surprisingly small. This was due to several factors. The warning system, for one thing, was highly effective, while, for another, the Finns were readily susceptible to discipline and sought their shelters, by day and night, with a trained habit of self-preservation. But, more than these, it was the general lay-out of their population centres, a few old-established towns apart, which provided their inhabitants with a fair immunity, the Finnish township being built on scattered principle amid enveloping woods, and so offering but a casual target to the bomber.

In this connexion the situation of the Finnish capital, Helsinki, as compared with the city of Leningrad is deserving of a special mention. The former beautiful, and largely modernized, city houses a population of less than a quarter of a million, while the latter, second only to Moscow

in importance, contains more than 3 million inhabitants and is, besides, the terminal for five railway lines from the Russian interior. Such a city, it might be thought, were fair game for the bomber in time of war. It lies about sixty miles from the nearest Finnish frontier, or a quarter of an hour in flight, the equivalent distance from Soviet territory to Helsinki being just double that amount. Helsinki itself was bombed sporadically throughout the war, though it has to be admitted that it was never heavily attacked, and that its environs and suburbs, rather than the centre of the city, received the main attention of the Soviet Air Force. This may have been because the Russians desired rather to point a moral than to cause a vast destruction, or it may have been partly due to the efficacy of Helsinki's anti-aircraft gunners, who frequently clawed the raiders from the sky. However it may be, the fact remains that Leningrad was never once the object of reprisal attack, and here exists a salient example of that curious condition of half-truce which can obtain when, of two countries at war, one possesses preponderant air power and the other merely a vestige in comparison.

For the Russians had Helsinki always at their mercy, and could at any time have obliterated the city's life, while the Finns, using their total bombing force, could never have done more than inflict wounds on Leningrad. Rather than see their capital in ruins, therefore, they withheld; a decision which well suited their adversary, who could reap no military gain from the destruction of Helsinki.

Otherwise, there were no air-tactical developments of note, such as the German Air Force was later to display, in the conduct of this war. The Russians did have recourse to parachuting, but it was singularly unsuccessful over such an unfavourable and forested terrain. When the peace parleys commenced on March 10th there was fight left in the Finnish Air Force as well as with her forces on the ground. But without hope of outside succour she fought a losing battle against an enemy whose resources were inexhaustible, and so, after giving an example to the world of magnificent endurance, the remnants of her air power surrendered with her army.

While the Russo-Finnish War was raging the Allied and Nazi Air Forces continued to take toll of one another in a series of operations adapted to the strategical necessities, or the individual preferences, of each country concerned. In this connexion, however, the French *Armée de l'Air*, not greatly exercised at that time with the problem of home defence and under no necessity to guard other than the eastern frontier

of France, confined its activities to normal work above the line and to reconnaissances over Nazi territory, which, as with our own, were purely of an exploratory nature with no offensive purpose.

With the Nazi Air Force *vis-à-vis* our own it was quite different. In both cases there was much of the usual activity over, and immediately behind, the lines, consisting, for the most part, of close reconnaissance, photography of works, and artillery co-operation, with fighter patrols in overhead protection of the working aircraft, and fairly frequent combat in the air. In these respects the Royal Air Force was more energetically employed than its adversary over the way, and in the sharp encounters which took place it usually came off much the better of the two. In both cases, also, deep penetration by reconnaissance machines into the heart of hostile territory was the order of the day—and night—though here again the Royal Air Force was much more active, and consistent, than the Nazi aircraft, and covered a vastly greater mileage.

But there was other air to fly in for an enemy who could dispose of surplus power, and who had different fish to fry. There was the watery stretch of the North Sea, with tempting targets on its surface for a bomber, and at the thither end a coastline to reconnoitre which harboured British ships-of-war. There were mines to lay from aircraft, fishing fleets to drown, and other ways beside by which to injure British sea power and diminish its mercantile marine. In this way there arose an offshoot of the war, quite unrelated to the main operation on the frontiers of France and Germany, in which the enemy consistently assumed the rôle of attacker while we, in natural reaction, were thrown on our defence.

It is a curious commentary on this situation that our might at sea, the very bulwark of our nation, should have favoured the enemy's air strategy and have been a disadvantage to our own. But for an occasional U-boat, more than one of which was bombed to destruction by aircraft of the Coastal Command, the North Sea wastes were empty of Nazi shipping, while their meagre Fleet was scattered in so many ports and roadsteads, some of them most difficult of approach by air, that it was simply not worth while, except on sure information, to risk the long flight to and fro. The enemy, however, suffered under no such handicap, and any flight of his, by day or night, to our shores was likely to be well repaid. There were convoys always on the move and unescorted neutral shipping ploughing across or up and down, while Scapa Flow and the Firth of Forth, to mention only those, were sure to contain sufficient units of the British Navy to warrant air attack.

Moreover, his behaviour was logical and in the direct furtherance of his scheme of war. He was out against our sea power with all his might and with every weapon he had at hand, its very superabundance rendering the task easier. What more natural or reasonable, then, than that he should throw his surplus air power into the fight and utilize it fully as a deadly weapon of attack instead of holding it in leash ?

So that the situation in the air was really this : Apart from the ordinary over-the-line activity, which was common to both adversaries, we were expending a great deal of energy on long, overland flights into the heart of Germany which, whatever their moral and educational value, did no material damage to the enemy. He, on the other hand, pursued aggressive tactics from the first, and brought the fight to our shores, by persistent air attack on all kinds of shipping, including herring drifters and even lightships, while simultaneously keeping our Fleet activities under constant observation and, occasionally, dealing it a blow. It is not suggested that these tactics of the enemy were an invariable success, or even that on exchange he had the better of it. But they consisted of attack, while we stood on defence ; they were in pursuance of a policy, while we had none ; and they did employ on missions of destruction a section of his air power, while our own was sprinkling German towns with leaflets.

Here and there, indeed, they scored a notable success. Damage was done to ships-of-war, on more than one occasion, both at Scapa Flow and in the Firth of Forth. Our east coast estuaries, notably the Thames, were strewn with magnetic mines by Nazi flying-boats and bombers. Several merchant ships were sunk by direct air attack, and many trawlers were sent to the bottom in the same way. But the enemy did not, by any means, have it all his own way, and he had to pay a costly bill in aircraft lost in combat with our fighters of the Home Defence. With a curious persistency, anxious no doubt to study the habits of our Fleet and to note the paths of convoys, he sent over single reconnaissance machines unendingly by day, from which a heavy toll was exacted by our Hurricanes and Spitfires. It is hardly understandable how he had the hardihood to continue in this way, for, until his Norwegian adventure gave an entirely new twist to affairs, no less than sixty-seven of these aircraft were destroyed in combat at the cost of only one British fighter, the pilot of which was later rescued from the sea.

In other ways as well, we actively endeavoured to damp the enemy's enthusiasm for enterprises of the sort, striking at those seaplane, flying-

boat, and bomber bases within our reach which were in use for air attack against our coasts and shipping. As an instance, the Royal Air Force Coastal Command instituted the system of security patrols, dispatching aircraft nightly to maintain a watch, from dusk to dawn, over those localities in and about the Frisian Islands, and the Heligoland Bight between, from which ascended after dark the mine-laying machines which dropped magnetic mines in our river estuaries and in the paths of convoys. This measure of restraint did indeed diminish the sinister activities of these night-time visitants, for on the slightest indication of a flare-path being got ready, either on land or water, it was promptly noted from above and bombs immediately were dropped. But this was purely a defensive measure designed to counter the offensive tactics of the enemy in the air, and it entailed, moreover, a heavy strain on equipment and personnel that would have been better employed on aggressive missions of their own.

Much more to the point were the raids in force by British bombers on the same hostile bases, which not only had a considerable destructive and demoralizing effect, but served as well for an assertion of our air power that could not be entirely concealed from Germany at large, and cheered our people as much as it dispirited the population of the enemy. These more intensive efforts were by no means matters of everyday occurrence, for they were attended with large risk, and our numerical inferiority in the air did not permit of the constant drain on material and personnel that incessant raiding might so easily have caused.

In addition, our policy of frequent night reconnaissance over the far interior of Germany, mainly conducted by bombers of the Metropolitan Air Force, made a large demand on the energy available for other forms of flight. But of that more anon.

Brief particulars of our air attacks on Nazi North Sea bases are as follows. On December 14th the Bight of Heligoland was raided as a result of information received, and our bombers were heavily attacked by outnumbering formations of Messerschmitts which included several of the new type Me. 110, a two-seater fighter with a cannon mounting as well as four machine-guns. In the course of action the British bomber crews gave an excellent account of themselves, largely owing to the efficiency of the power-operated turret, shooting down five of the enemy and sending others limping home. But it was at the cost of three of our machines, and on exchange, weighing carefully the loss on either side in men and manufacturing man-power, it cannot be claimed as other than a moral

victory. That same night our machines were out again and successfully bombed the seaplane bases at Borkum, Nordeney, and Sylt, returning on this occasion without loss to themselves.

Three days later, on December 18th, British bombers flew once more by day over Heligoland Bight, where, it had been reported, several Nazi ships-of-war were assembling for action in the open sea. The ships were there and bomb salvos were released upon them, but they were heavily protected by Nazi fighters which arose in flocks from adjacent aerodromes, and gave such fierce battle to our bombers that they had much ado to hold their own. Once more the power-operated turrets served their turn, and, combined with the ardent fighting spirit of the men who worked them, did fell damage to the enemy. Twelve Messerschmitts succumbed to the accuracy of our fire in the combat that ensued, but seven British bombers were lost in the engagement, never to return. This was severe loss and, as before, we came off second-best if men and weight of metal alone be counted. On the other hand, we were rapidly forcing a conviction on the enemy that our bombers were not lightly to be tampered with, a persuasion that served us well in later days when the battle broke in Flanders, and we were flying through an air that was thick with Nazi fighters.

On January 2nd a formation of three British bombers, about to carry out an attack on the island fringe of Germany, encountered twelve of the redoubtable Me. 110s and a fight immediately took place. A Messerschmitt went down in flames and two others were probably lost after being driven to the surface of the water. One of our machines was shot down and another was not heard of again. On January 10th we raided Sylt again, and without loss, damaging by direct hits the Hindenberg Dam, the sole land communication with the mainland. On March 12th, after an interval of quietude mainly the result of bad weather, one of our bombers forming part of an offensive reconnoitring patrol over the Heligoland Bight successfully attacked and sunk a U-boat which had unknowingly surfaced in the sheltered water.

This was the day on which the Finns concluded their Peace Treaty with Russia, and a week later, on March 19th, Royal Air Force bombers raided Sylt throughout the hours of darkness in relays of small formations, doing extensive damage, especially at Hornum, to hangars, slipways, oil tanks, and to seaplanes moored in the basins. Three days previously Nazi aircraft had made a raid in force on the Fleet anchorage at Scapa Flow, though without any great result, and the Sylt attack was timed

conveniently as a reprisal for that operation from the air. One only of our bombers failed to return, in spite of the long-drawn-out nature of the raid, the numbers engaged, and the fierceness of the fire that was put up from the ground. It was remarkable on another account as well, for by means of wireless transmission from a few among the raiders the Prime Minister was able to inform the House of what was taking place at the very moment of the happening. On April 4th bombers penetrated the defences of Jade Bay, near Wilhelmshaven, and bombed an enemy warship lying in that harbour.

Such in brief is the story of our return action for the enemy's persistent air attacks on shipping and on the bases of the Fleet. It taught the Nazi pilots to beware of British aircraft, and it built up a morale among our flying crews which made them paladins when the real testing time arrived, now so near. For on April 9th, five days after the last event above recorded, Herr Hitler's plan was ripe and he invaded Denmark and Norway under the specious pretext that those two weak neutrals needed his protection. At once the war took on a new complexion. We gave up our desultory raiding over Nazi North Sea bases, the enemy abandoned his visits to our shores, and both sides applied all available air power to the exigencies of the new theatre of war.

But before relating the general course, and the main incidents, of that campaign it will not come amiss to refer briefly to the much-disputed policy of the bloodless propaganda flights, and long reconnaissances, which consumed so much energy until Herr Hitler cast the final die by flooding the Low Countries with his troops before he turned on France. The leaflet-dropping missions, in which might be traced the lingering hope of disillusioned statesmen that the German people would be strong enough to repudiate their leadership, were founded on a sheer misreading of Teutonic character, a race which—by and large—has always embraced its chains and craved to be subjected to a tyrant. It was hoped thus to eat at the heart of the nation's loyalty to a tyrannical régime, though in what way, if successful, the elements of reaction were to set to work has never been disclosed. The policy was doomed to failure from the start, for the people of the Reich were in subjection and had no means of self-expression. And yet there was a saving clause about it. It did afford concrete evidence that British aircraft were able to penetrate the German sky as, and when, and where it listed them to do so. Further, the leaflet flights went always hand in hand with observation and reconnaissance, teaching our pilots the familiar landmarks, testing out the enemy's

arrangements for defence and, in general, serving to accumulate a mass of data which could be usefully employed when the time was ripe for striking at the innumerable military objectives with which the land was freely interspersed.

It might have been much better to bomb from the beginning, and we ourselves could have done so from French aerodromes with little danger of reprisal action by the enemy. But the Nazi air power was overwhelmingly superior to that of France, which would then have been subjected to intensive air bombardment throughout its length and breadth, an ordeal which must have hampered her war effort at the time and, possibly, have aroused among her masses the spirit of defeat. On the whole it is fair criticism to suggest that we were over-energetic in this style of warfare, and that some, at least, of the lengthy flights were ill repaid in the matter of information brought back. It might have been better to conserve a portion of the energy outpoured for the fast-approaching day of trial.

On April 9th, 1940, a sombre day began to dawn, not heralded by roseate streaks, or gradually as darkness changed to light, but suddenly and like a clap of thunder. For Herr Hitler on that day invaded Denmark and Norway, and the pulse of war, which had been beating slowly until then, at once quickened to the measure of a fever. Actually these invasions were but a curtain-raiser to the greater drama about to be performed in France and Flanders, though there was no waiting interval between the two and the subtle blow dealt in the north was quickly followed by a cudgel-stroke amidships. Denmark surrendered at discretion, but Norway, her people made of sterner stuff, resisted stoutly in spite of the seizure of her capital, and of her chief ports, by a series of stratagems, combined with treachery within her gates, which were more creditable to Germany's military invention than to her good faith.

Copenhagen was occupied at daybreak, Oslo in the afternoon, while news came to hand that Stavanger, Bergen, Trondheim, Narvik in the far north, and other ports of less importance were in German possession as the day proceeded. One immediate result of these seizures was to bring the northern section of the British coast, including the Orkneys and the Shetlands, within a much shorter radius of enemy action by sea and air, and, although taken completely by surprise, our Navy and our Air Force reacted swiftly. The Government announced its intention to extend full military aid to Norway, and, before the close of day, sea-fights had taken place in the neighbourhood of Bergen and Narvik, while a bombing raid

by the Royal Air Force did damage to two enemy cruisers lying off the former port.

An immediate requirement was to stop the flow of Nazi reinforcements across the Kattegat, and a Fleet action took place in that water on April 10th, with bombers taking part, which had a large success. But Germany had other methods of landing troops besides sea-transport, and an unceasing flow of Junker troop-carrying aircraft conveyed an ever-increasing number of well-armed infantry to the various airfields adjacent to the ports that had been occupied, and which had been simultaneously taken over.

Almost at once marching columns of Nazi troops, covered by strong advanced guards in seized motor vehicles, debouched from Oslo and commenced a movement to the north with the obvious intention of cutting through to Trondheim, and so possessing themselves of the whole southern half of the country where almost all the population was concentrated. In support of this manœuvre, the success of which would well repay all risk, Nazi soldiers in large numbers were parachuted from aircraft to the ground in various well-selected places, and, for the reason that the Norwegian arms stores and munition depots were, for the most part, in German hands, they exercised an influence on the military situation that was out of all proportion to their strength.

In the next few days a brisk activity on the part of the Fleet Air Arm and the Royal Air Force supplemented the action of the Navy, the former singling out warships, troop transports, and supply vessels for their attack, while the latter concentrated their main attention on the occupied airfields in an attempt to stop the flow of reinforcements and to make the surfaces unusable. The aerodrome at Stavanger, as being modernly equipped and the largest in the country, was bombed relentlessly, and many photographs which were later issued to the Press bore witness to the extensive damage that was done. These raids took place by day and night, and, on many occasions, the raiders had to defend themselves from hostile fighters. That they continued to render a good account of themselves is proven by an Air Ministry announcement that nineteen German planes had been shot down over Norway in the first four days, with the loss of six British machines.

But the enemy, whose bases were near at hand, could readily replace his loss, while the bomb craters on the runways could be continually filled in. The absence of British fighters, the petrol supply of which did not enable them to fly both ways and fight, was also a heavy handicap, and so, notwithstanding every effort to combat it, the Nazi air power grew

until it became the undisputed master of the Norwegian air and could fly with extreme audacity quite unopposed.

On April 15th the Admiralty and War Office announced that British forces had been landed at several points in Norway, and the whole population of the country sat back to hear of their successes and to mark their steps towards victory. It was soon divulged that the little ports of Namsos and Aandalsnes, north and south respectively of Trondheim, had been chosen as the points of disembarkation. These mere overgrown fishing-villages were the terminals of single railway lines, in the one case running south to Trondheim, and in the other threading a difficult country to Domaas, an important junction on the main line from Oslo to the north. A pincer movement was projected on Trondheim, a place of vast strategical importance, from which, with air protection overhead, our forces could advance to the re-conquest of the country. Some surprise was felt that the enemy had left these two landing-places unguarded, and two opinions were given. One was that they were so ill-provided with facilities for disembarking heavy war material that it was not thought worth while to occupy them, while others darkly hinted, after the event, that they were purposefully left open as a lure.

Be that as it may, and only Nazi archives can reveal the truth, the two expeditions which set out from these slender footholds on a foreign coast were ill-fated from the start. Theirs was a cruel experience. From the day they first set foot ashore until, less than three weeks later, they were skilfully re-embarked and transferred home they could hardly draw breath without attracting the notice of the enemy bombers, who owned the air and crowded it with their wings. Hastily assembled at a Scottish port to meet the sudden emergency, not picked troops in any sense of the word, lightly equipped for the reason that heavy armament could not be got ashore, they went forward from their scanty bases to meet an enemy flushed with easily won successes and provided with all the necessary munitions required to smash a way to victory. The North-West Expeditionary Force, as these adventurous columns had been officially called, performed prodigies of valour and showed a disregard of danger which, under less adverse circumstances, would have assured it success. But everywhere the bomber rode the sky above them, depriving the men of rest, scattering them to cover, and effectually preventing that ordered progress, in keeping with a well-laid plan, which alone was calculated to stem the Nazi onrush from the south or to facilitate recapture of the objective, Trondheim.

The Royal Air Force, by an intensification of air attack on the occupied aerodromes, did all it could to diminish the pressure of the Nazi bombers. Stavanger, Trondheim, Kristiansand, Aalborg in Denmark, Westerland in Sylt, Fornebu and Kjeller near Oslo were bombed and bombed again in this furious endeavour to cripple the local air power of the enemy, while the Fleet Air Arm, under the shield of escorting ships-of-war, concentrated its energy on Bergen. But it was to little avail, for as fast as enemy aircraft were, by this means, put out of action or destroyed, faster still did replenishment arrive from the vast reserves at home that Germany commanded. Too late it was realized that unless Royal Air Force fighters could be established on the mainland to shoot the hostile bombers down the expedition was doomed to failure, if not disaster. But landing-grounds cannot be improvised without the fullest preparation, and while the surface was being got ready the enemy would be quick to notice the activity, and quicker still to hamper the proceeding by a rain of bombs.

At last a desperate expedient was tried, the story of which will surely rank high on the British scroll of fame. It happened that the Air Ministry was still in the possession of an aircraft type which, though obsolescent, was capable of a fine performance, was extremely manoeuvrable in the air, and, best of all, got quickly off the ground. This was the Gloster "Gladiator," with a speed of 255 m.p.h., a service ceiling of 32,800 feet, and a power of climb that took it up to 10,000 feet in the remarkably short space of four minutes. Its armament was formidable, consisting of two Vickers, and two Browning, machine-guns, the former firing on either side of the fuselage, and the latter below each bottom wing. The Gladiator had been outclassed by the Hurricane and Spitfire, than which no better fighter had ever cleaved the air, but it was still a serviceable machine, able to withstand rough usage, and eminently the type best fitted to meet the hard conditions of flight in Norway.

After considerable prospecting it was decided that the surface of a frozen lake near a little place named Leskesjogen, some forty miles south-west of Aandalsnes, must serve as landing-ground, and men were put at work to sweep it clear of snow while the necessary supplies of fuel and ammunition were by others assembled on the spot. Meanwhile a Gladiator squadron, eighteen aircraft strong, had been put aboard an aircraft-carrier and transported from a British naval port to within a hundred and fifty miles of the Norwegian coast. The remainder of the journey it performed by air, flying towards its poor accommodation in the

face of a blinding snowstorm, while fighters of the Fleet Air Arm accompanied it for protection until it was safely grounded on the surface of the ice. The landing was effected in the late afternoon and the first patrol took off to seek its prey at 10 p.m. in the clear visibility of the northern sky.

The sheer audacity of the move may have taken the enemy partially by surprise, but the unwonted spectacle of agitation on the placid surface of a lake, amid the solitude around, soon aroused his curiosity. A dawn patrol went up at 4 a.m. and sent a Heinkel to its doom, but for the remainder of the day, and indeed for the whole short period during which the devoted squadron remained in being, it was subjected to a continuous and relentless bombardment from the air, amid the hell of which the pilots and their mechanics functioned with a bravery unsurpassed. Naturally there was no shelter at hand, while, to make matters worse, one effect of the bombardment was to break the ice in places and thus make it more and more difficult for the pilots to land and take off. All that men could do they did, not thinking of their safety but wholly concentrated on the fulfilment of their mission: to shoot down Nazi bombers from the sky. No sooner did a formation return from combat than it was re-fuelled, re-armed, and in the air again to engage the whirling aircraft of the enemy which hovered continually overhead.

The Gladiators, when momentarily at rest, were dispersed around the edges of the lake so as to offer the least possible mark to the bombers up above, but in such a confined space, and with such a clear target ring below, damage was inescapable as the day wore on, and when night fell only five out of the original eighteen were fit for service on the morrow. It was natural that casualties should occur, for to the ordeal by bomb was added the equally effective action of machine-gun firing from the air. Some were even suffering from severe burns caused by their attempts at salvage when machines or stores were set afire. In spite of the almost insurmountable difficulties the squadron's residue went on flying to the bitter end, while machine-guns were removed from derelict machines to serve as ground defence. Throughout the third day the fight at odds continued, as the enemy readdressed himself to the task of annihilating the squadron. Ammunition began to give out, but even so the few machines remaining went up to deliver feint attacks in the hope of disconcerting the enemy. A certain pilot was so persistently beset by three Nazi fighters that he could only manage to shake them off by the threat of a collision in mid-air.

At night-fall on the third day only one Gladiator was in service, and it became an immediate question of retreat from an utterly untenable position. After destroying what remained of the stores the pilots and mechanics withdrew to the coast, there to be received aboard a waiting vessel which was bombed continuously for six hours as it made its way to sea. It remains to add to this epic story of the Gladiators that their pilots engaged in thirty-seven combats altogether, accounting certainly for fourteen Nazi bombers which were plainly seen to crash, and for a further possible sixteen which were badly damaged, but could not be vouched for as destroyed.

It was immediately after this gallant, though ineffectual, effort to relieve the bomber pressure on our troops that the North-West Expeditionary Force was skilfully re-embarked from the ill-equipped ports from which it had hopefully set out so short a time before. Once more it had been proved that the side holding mastery of the air can bear down an opponent, directly and indirectly, by that means alone. This principle had shown itself triumphant on many previous occasions, and in varying ways, but the British people learn such lessons hardly. A classic example occurred in Abyssinia. Only China's vastness, and the insensitiveness of her multi-millions to shock, has saved her from a like fate. Both Austria and Czecho-Slovakia laid down their arms rather than see Vienna and Prague destroyed by air bombardment. In Spain it was Franco's immensely preponderant air power that paved his way to victory. The story of Poland is too recent to need retelling.

And yet, in the face of these tragic illustrations of the point, we cheerfully consigned some thousands of our soldiers into the keeping of the god of battles entirely bereft of overhead protection, and without the slightest chance of making the deficiency good. Why? How came we to arrive at such a decision? It has been variously explained.

The Norwegian forces that had been able to take the field were small in number, scattered, ill-armed, and largely demoralized by the treacherous disintegration of their structure as an army. They had lost their main towns and, with that, their munition depots, and had, in consequence, no feeling of solidity which a known reserve of men and stores alone imparts to the potential fighting value of a battlefront. A stimulus was badly needed to enable them to fight on, and the only remedy at hand was the presence in the field of Allied reinforcements to stiffen their resistance.

On every count the recapture of Trondheim was a desirable proceed-

ing. It was the ancient capital and was venerated, for religious and historical reasons, by the Norwegian people. It marked the present limits of Nazi penetration, except for Narvik in the north, and its reconquest would give promise of an established position from which, by gradual advance, the invader might in time be wholly overcome. Lastly, the facilities, such as they were, of Namsos and Aandalsnes in combination were applicable to no other form of strategy. Taking all this into consideration, and disregarding the unhappy plight of troops who would be entirely unprotected from the air, the North-West Expeditionary Force was embarked on a forlorn hope in answer to a cry for help which, except on purely military grounds, was not to be rejected. Our men got back without calamity, and that is the best that can be said. But they underwent cruel hardship unavailingly and the leadership that sent them there, unarmed against the bomber, must bear a heavy burden of responsibility.

After their departure the only foothold of resistance left in Norway was at Narvik, a chapter in the history of the invasion which demands separate treatment. Probably no detached operation in modern war was ever enshrouded in such a fog of general ignorance and misconception as that dealing with the give and take of battle in and around this little iron-ore port, with its 7,000 inhabitants and its mineral railway to the Kiruna and Gällivare ore-fields in Lapland Sweden. The beginning of the story, and the part played by the British Navy, is quite clear, but very soon a mist settled over that region from which unheard-of place-names peered forth, while the vicinity over which land-fighting was taking place expanded and contracted in the most confusing manner.

The Nazi forces captured Narvik by stealth, on April 9th, in much the same way that other Norwegian places fell, but in the next few succeeding days their ships-of-war and supply ships in the bay were completely destroyed by the action of the British Navy, and the public at home relievedly put paid to that account. Marines were landed and, later, British and French troops, but then, for the ensuing fortnight, a curtain came down on the little war up there. That curtain was never again lifted right up to the top, though occasionally the expectant audience was afforded a passing glimpse of the drama going on behind. On May 1st, for instance, it was told that areas occupied by Allied forces had been extended, and the next day that detachments were in contact with the enemy. On May 5th Nazi bombers flew up from the south to take part in the operations, and on May 7th the Nazi High Command itself

admitted that our pressure was increasing. And so it went on. No one could follow the actual trend of operations, except that we seemed to be continually converging on Narvik without ever quite getting there, and when, finally, on May 28th, we did really occupy the place it was only to learn that the enemy was still resisting in the villages around and along the railway line.

There was a certain amount of air activity by the Fleet Air Arm, but very little of it escaped for publication, and still the public puzzled how the original Nazi landing party, at most 3,000 strong, could so prolong resistance, cut off as it appeared to be from its main body some hundreds of miles away. Actually, of course, it was continually being supplied by air. Reinforcements, stores of all kinds, ammunition, even artillery were being delivered by parachute. Nevertheless, the Nazi forces were being slowly overborne, and it did look as if the Allies were at last to score a signal victory, when events in France thrust the Narvik operations into the background of affairs and occasioned the withdrawal of the French and British troops, whose presence on the main field of battle was urgently required. But that event is outside the purview of this chapter. From an air point of view this minor operation was remarkable for the way in which a practically beleaguered force was sustained by means of aircraft. Without the air-borne supplies and reinforcements it must have suffered an early defeat, even though the rugged nature of the country lent itself to the defence. It was again air power that conduced to this result, and it must be said of the Nazi leaders that they were skilful in its application.

Hardly was the Norwegian curtain-raiser played when Herr Hitler, one month exactly to the day after his invasion of that country, burst across the frontiers of Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg, opposite which he had for some time previously mounted a full-scale attack. Although not strictly pertinent to the subject of this chapter it may not come amiss to say a few words about the strategy that underlay the colossal manoeuvre of which this was the commencement.

Briefly, it was in general keeping with the grandiose conception of Count Schlieffen, the famous German strategist, who planned before his death in 1913 the military conquest of France. His great idea was to dally with the French armies on the Rhine, even to the extent of luring them forward by a few small successes, while the full weight of German arms performed a sweeping right wheel through the Low Countries, through Artois, Picardy, and Normandy, then west and south of Paris, until they wheeled again and, driving all before them, pinned the remain-

ing military strength of France between their irresistible advance and the Rhineland frontier. The younger Count von Moltke was entrusted with the Schlieffen Plan in 1914, but through timidity his right wheel fell very short of the wide sweep that had been originally conceived. He very nearly succeeded as it was, and most probably would have done so but for the fact that Russia was creating havoc in East Prussia.

Hence, on this occasion, the elimination of the Soviet Union as an enemy of Germany, and hence, as well, the restoration of Count Schlieffen's plan in its entirety—Count von Moltke's timid strategy having always rankled in Herr Hitler's mind. It remains for notice that in the present war the French themselves have played into the Nazi hands, for the Maginot Line is a better anvil than the hilly, wooded districts of Alsace and Lorraine against which to hammer out the iron of France's fighting strength. His unexpected successes in the Ardennes and, later, in the coastal regions of the north, caused Herr Hitler to modify the subsequent stages of his original strategy, but in essence it was the Schlieffen Plan enacted as it should have been a quarter of a century ago.

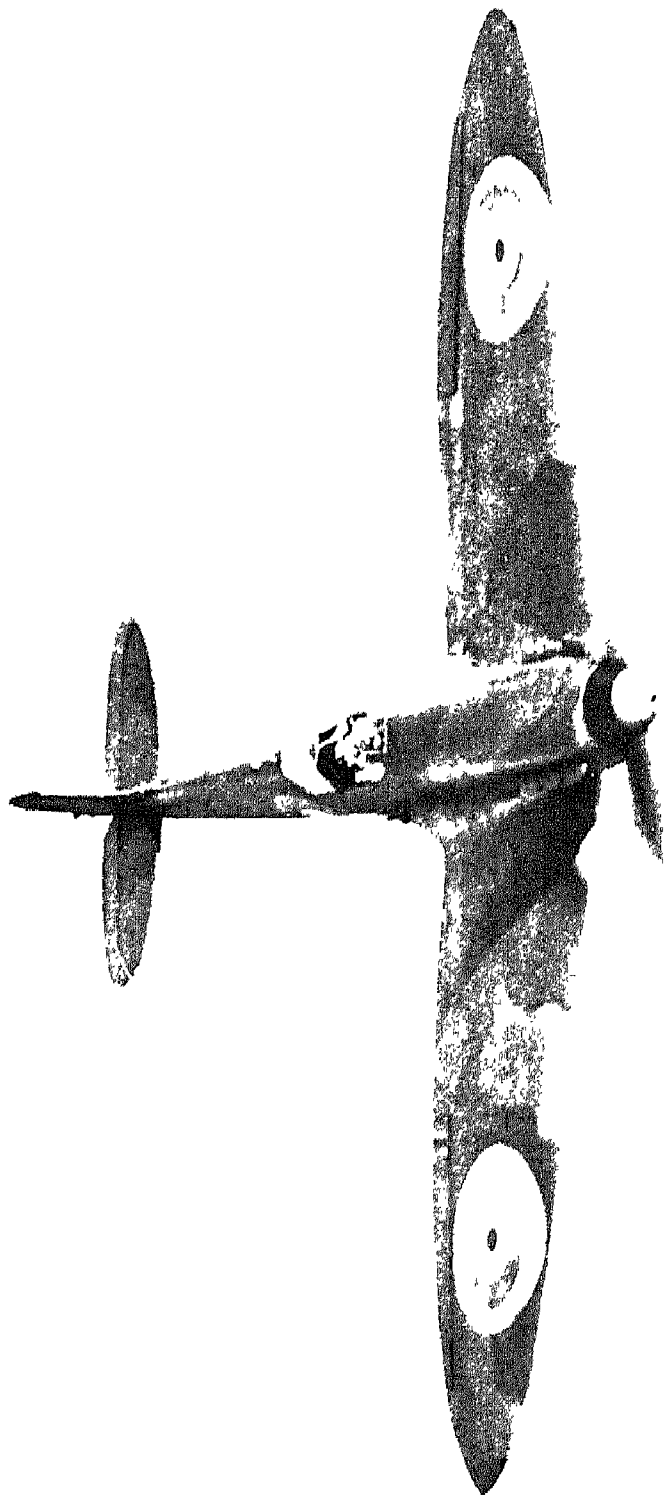
And now, before turning to the part played by air power in the momentous events to follow, it will be well, with utmost brevity, to set forth in sequence the various stages of the gigantic conflict. At dawn on May 10th the Nazi armies crossed the frontiers, and, a little later on the same day, the Allied forces sped to the assistance of the invaded countries. Three days later, on May 13th, the Dutch Army retired from all its forward positions to the flooded zone and simultaneously the Belgian forces withdrew from the line of the Meuse and Albert Canal to secondary defensive systems covering Brussels. The next day, on May 14th, the Dutch Army surrendered. The day after that, May 15th, the enemy drove a salient into the French lines near Sedan, thereby creating the famous "bulge" which grew and grew, gradually to shape due west and become the broad blade of a scythe, mowing down all opposition and, finally, curving north along the French coast as far as Dunkirk. On May 17th the British Expeditionary Force in the centre, and the French and Belgian forces to its right and left respectively, withdrew west of Brussels and became detached from the main French Army to the south owing to the enemy's break-through at the "bulge." Four days later, May 21st, Abbeville, on the estuary of the Somme, was entered by the enemy, who at once wheeled left along the coast and began seriously to threaten the Channel Ports. On May 26th a strong offensive was launched against the Belgian Army on the left of the Allied line, and two days later, May 28th,

the King of the Belgians ordered it to lay down its arms. From then onwards the British Expeditionary Force and those French forces that had similarly been detached from the main army, now endeavouring to form a line of defence on the left bank of the Somme, fought a gallant rearguard action against enormous odds in slow retreat towards Dunkirk. On May 30th the evacuation process commenced and continued until 7 a.m. on June 4th, after which there was silence in that neighbourhood while the enemy gathered himself to spring southwards and renew the battle on the French, with whom was still associated a small section of the British Expeditionary Force which had not been entrapped with the major portion in the north.

Such, in skeleton outline, is the whirlwind story of the enemy's success in the opening chapter of his carefully prepared offensive. Within the inconceivably short period of twenty-six days he had overrun the whole of the Low Countries, compelling the abject surrender of their forces of defence, had driven the British Expeditionary Force into the sea with the loss of its entire mechanized equipment, and had cut a swathe through the northern part of France which had involved terrific loss to our Ally and had forced upon the French Generalissimo the necessity of building up a new defensive line on unprepared ground. What explanation is there for this astounding series of successes?

In the purely military sphere, with which we are not immediately concerned, it was largely due to heavy tanks and the bold tactical manner in which they were employed. But this is not by any means the whole story. For in altogether novel ways, and with most sinister result, the Nazi Air Force was employed to cause a canker in the rear of the defending armies while aircraft of other type, tanks, and all the medley of war's modern weapons were battering at their fronts. No one can accuse the Nazi military youth of want of pluck, or was it, rather, that under the spur of "total" leadership, so little reckoning of human life, the courage it displayed belonged to the impetuous variety of driven sheep? Scarcely, for great bravery was required to carry out the perilous missions that many of them were set to do behind the lines.

Important aerodromes were selected for air attack and, in the resulting chaos and confusion, parachute detachments would float down from the sky. These specialized and well-armed troops would thereupon turn a devastating fire on any defenders who remained in sight, while troop-carrying aircraft would then sail in to land reinforcements and heavier war material, not excepting light howitzers. In this way a strong point



A SPITFIRE FIGHTER IN FLIGHT

could easily be formed which, aided by fifth-column activities, was calculated to hold its own until the rapid progress of the main attack pierced the defences thus weakened from the rear. So it happened at the airports of Schiphol, near Amsterdam, of Waalhaven, near Rotterdam, and at other of the Dutch aviation centres.

Nothing could have been better contrived to spread alarm and despondency, for a small and densely populated country provides the best possible opportunity for such tactics. Rumour flies from mouth to mouth, magnifying itself in the process, civilians become distracted to the point of a despairing helplessness, and in an incredibly short space of time the fighting man, who all the time is up against an enemy superior in every way, is made aware that danger threatens from behind as well. Thus demoralization sets in, for although the soldier can cope with partial encirclement in the field of arms, the thought that his base is insecure, and that his hearth is threatened, deprives him of the right stimulus to fight on.

The enemy's parachute detachments were almost an equal menace, not so much on account of the mischief they might do, but because they multiplied suspicion everywhere, made of each stranger a potential foe, and created a general feeling of unguardedness that had the worst effects. The world was well aware that parachuting had appeared on the scene of war. The Soviet Union Air Force, indeed, had paraded the fact for some time past, arranging huge displays of the novel tactics in which even field artillery and light tanks had been dropped to earth successfully. It had been tried in Finland, though the nature of the terrain, and the sparseness of its population, did not make of that country a good field for experiment.

Rumour had it occasionally in the Press that France and Germany were both dabbling with the same idea, but nothing appeared in the various publications on which to fasten a belief that it was being taken seriously. France indeed stayed in the dabble stage, while we in Great Britain were apt to scoff at the possibility as merely a new-fangled notion. But Germany, in utmost secrecy and quick to seize on any military invention that was promising of result, adopted this one with avidity, training a large parachute force to a high pitch of skill and technical accomplishment, and dispatching it to take part in the gigantic battle staged by Herr Hitler with all the disconcerting effect of complete surprise. In scores and hundreds, more especially in Belgium and Holland, they settled from the sky behind the Allied lines. For the most part they were young men clad in uniform and properly accredited as soldiers, whose chief

mission was to aid the general endeavour of their side by ambuscade, by terrorism, by sabotage, and by any other means at hand.

It is said that the fort of Eben-Eymael, the most formidable defensive work in the Liège fortified position, was captured by such means. A horde of parachutists was dropped near by, and the survivors took up covering positions while a special detail, equipped with the necessary tools and high explosive, gained the cupola and started to dig mine-holes in its "gazon." In due course the charges were detonated and the fort blew up, the work of demolition being further guarded by machine-gun fire from infantry and aircraft. The Nazi uniformed parachute troops seem to have suffered most severe casualties, both while descending and after having landed. Moreover, when they failed eventually to gain contact with their own advancing line it was usually the case that they were quite easily rounded up.

But there were more insidious ways, than in plain military guise, by which they were enabled to exert an evil influence on the fortunes of the defending forces. Some, undoubtedly, were clad in Dutch and Belgian uniforms, a few, speaking of course the language of the country, in civilian attire, while it has been fairly credibly affirmed that in several cases individual parachutists wore female clothing, on occasions the dress of a religious order. Such were naturally selected for their local knowledge, very likely acquired as residents of the district that was thus invaded, and were peculiarly apt, on that account, at their devil's task of undermining faith in victory, of spreading defeatist rumour, and of establishing contact with the neighbouring fifth columnists.

In addition to troop-carrying by aircraft and the parachute method of attack, the Nazi Air Force showed a surprising aptitude for rendering direct assistance to the foremost elements of the advancing units on the ground. In the last war machine-gunning by aircraft and bombing from low altitudes had been practised by both sides, more particularly when the situation had become so critical that any means to stem a rapid breakthrough, even to the extent of withdrawing fighters from the upper air, was considered justifiable. The Polish campaign, rather to miscall that pitiful debacle, had shown that the Nazi Air Force had been trained to render hand-and-glove assistance to the Army, and that waves of bombers usually preceded a tank advance in order to prepare the way. But the dive-bombing tactics that were instantly employed against the Allies in the west, and which, owing to their novelty, obtained a full effect, were substantially new.

These bombers, of special design to withstand the strain of a sharp-angled, arrow-like descent, and often equipped with whistling devices to increase the fear they inspired, became to all intents and purposes projectile-firing machines with the precision of a cannon at short range. Diving from a height the pilot aimed his aircraft at the target area, so that on release his bombs continued along the line of flight while he, at about five hundred feet, pulled out. It was a species of point-blank bombardment from the air, quite different from the ordinary method in the use of which a complicated sighting apparatus, making due allowances for wind and speed and range, was necessary. Dive-bombing was used with telling effect throughout the early phases of the fighting, though it is fair to say that, as with everything else which comes with thunderous surprise, familiarity began to breed, if not contempt, at least a form of accustomedness which encouraged bold machine-gun crews to fire back.

A further feature of the fighting at this stage in northern France and Flanders, much emphasized by the adaptability of aircraft, was the rolling up before the onrush of the enemy of a human carpet of refugees which hampered the defence as if it were a military obstacle, and provided the attacking forces with a unique opportunity for striking at the very heart of civilian morale. It was an old story, this harassing of refugees, and its latest chapter had been written out in Poland. But Polish territory is wide and, except for the well-marked centres of population, Poland is not a thickly settled country. Here in Western Europe ideal conditions reigned, and the early interception of a message instructing airmen to harry the slowly moving masses toiling along on every road aroused an expectation of suffering and carnage that was more than amply fulfilled.

In all other respects the Nazi Air Force pursued a normal course of conduct, bombing aerodromes and military objectives in the rear, joining battle in the skies, and in general carrying out the duties of an ancillary weapon of war. It should be fully realized, however, that its novel usage in the ways to which attention has been drawn largely contributed to the military collapse of the Low Countries and, by that means, to the tragic trend of events which so rapidly ensued.

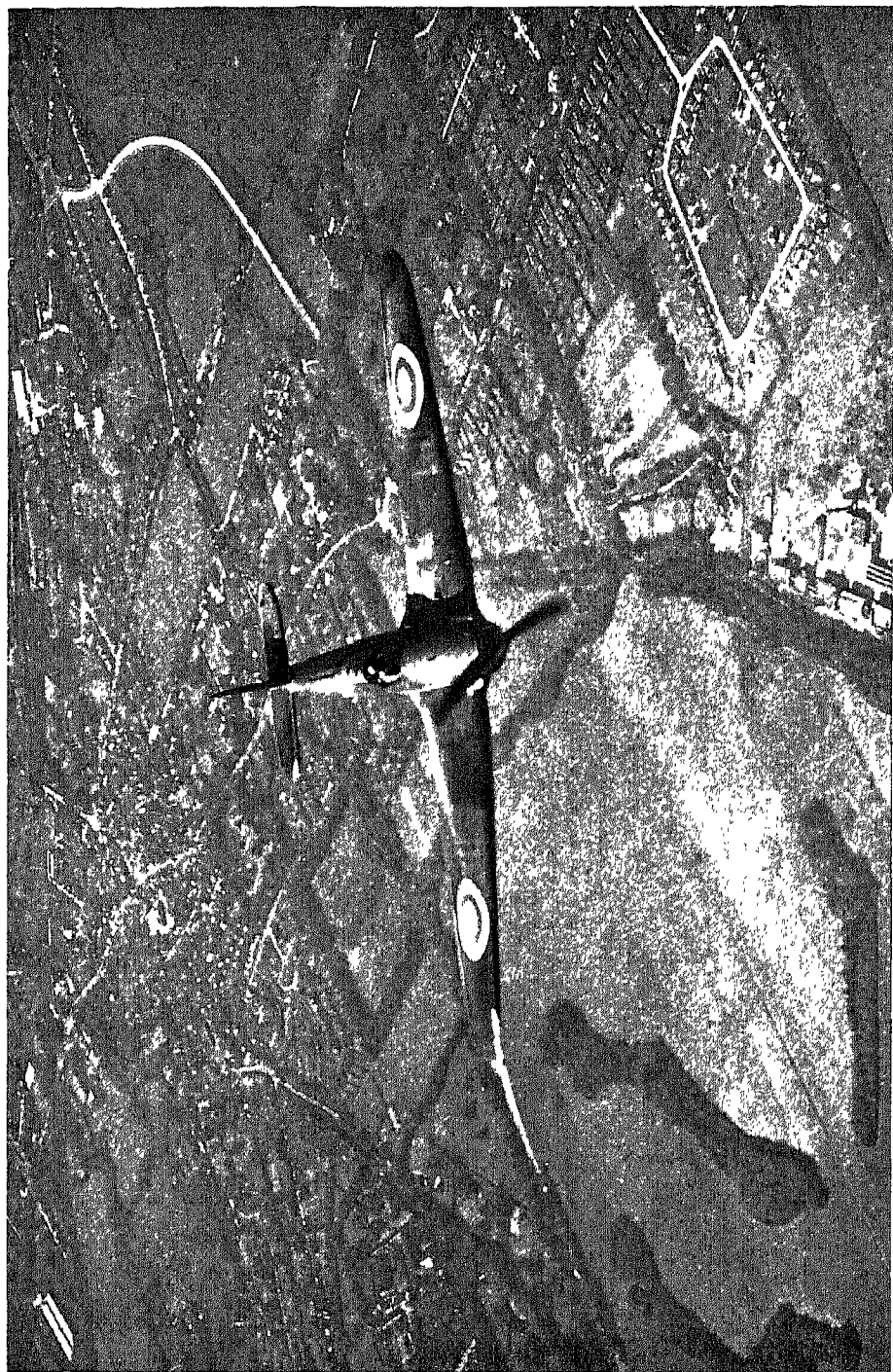
When, on Friday, May 10th, the storm burst in all its fury the Royal Air Force at home, and the Advanced Air Striking Force in France, were as if let slip from leash. Hitherto they had been held in and restrained from violent offensive action by the curious condition of static warfare

that had settled over the opposing fronts: the bombers content, perforce, with reconnaissance and leaflet raids, and the fighters, far too seldom for their liking, finding an enemy to do battle with above. But here at last was the real thing, and with a huge relief they literally leapt into the fray.

The situation in Holland first claimed attention and, during the all-too-short period of Dutch resistance, they leant their weight in that direction. The Nazi troop-carrying aircraft were attacked, the various Dutch aerodromes occupied by the enemy were bombed, and bombs were dropped on the advancing columns, their communications, and on the landing-fields from which the hostile aircraft were taking off.

On the fifth day the Dutch laid down their arms, and immediately the Royal Air Force concentrated a similar endeavour opposite the Belgian front, holding up, or checking, the enemy's advance while the army of King Leopold retired to new positions on an alignment west of Brussels. On May 16th our Metropolitan Air Force began to take a hand, and British bombers flew from home aerodromes to raid by night the enemy's roads, railways, and military concentrations east of the Rhine. Now at last they reaped the harvest sown by nine months of careful and continuous reconnaissance; their previously acquired knowledge of the ground over which they flew bore them directly to the spot, and enabled them to drop their lethal loads with deadly accuracy. The oil depots of Bremen and Hamburg were systematically attacked, and oil refineries at Hanover and in north-west Germany were set afire. The sensitive communication points at Cologne and Coblenz were bombed, and ceaseless raids on the Rhenish railway system were carried out.

Meanwhile our Hurricanes and Spitfires, and our lighter bombing aircraft, were actively engaged in the even more necessitous tasks of assisting their ground forces in the neighbouring air of the actual and ever-shifting battle fronts. The former never reckoned the numbers of the opposing fighters but invariably attacked, head on, whatever the odds against them, and so asserted their superiority that the moral ascendancy was theirs henceforth. The latter bombed objectives immediately behind the lines in the Meuse sector, at Namur and Charleroi, and, subsequent to the Nazi break-through, at places north of the River Aisne. There was heavy loss on both sides, and the French *Armée de l'Air*, the activities of which were in the main similar to those of the Royal Air Force, showed a reckless bravery that brought it many casualties. But on balance the Allied Air Forces came out victorious, for every one of



HAWKER HURRICANE FIGHTER ON ITS WAY TO THE COAST TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY

their machines brought down the enemy losing, on an average, from two to four.

But although this fierce and concentrated air activity dealt the enemy below severe blows, and contributed to delay and somewhat disorganize his advance, it could not avail to halt it or to relieve the armoured pressure of his serried metal ranks, sweeping over the invaded territories like a tidal wave. And when, on May 28th, King Leopold surrendered, thereby laying open the Allied northern flank, it became a foregone conclusion that the battle would be lost. Thereupon commenced the epic of Dunkirk, a story of heroic achievement by land and sea, but also, if ever, a saga of the air as well.

The tired men in tens of thousands who gathered on the sand dunes and patiently awaited their deliverance by sea, the brave efforts of the sailors and civilians who sailed inshore to take them off—this combination of endurance and resourceful courage could not have conduced to the eventual success of the historic evacuation had it not been for the intrepidity, the tirelessness, and the watch-dog guardianship of the Royal Air Force. Here it was, perhaps, that our airmen reached the summit of achievement. Below them they saw the soldier masses which, but for their exertions, would be decimated by the machine-gun bullet and the bomb, while just off-shore rode ships of all sizes and varieties which, but for the mere fact of local air superiority, would never reach the English coast again to off-load their exhausted human freight. It was quite a different task from that they had been doing. They were now on guard, instead of flying here and there in search of mobile targets. They constituted in fact an air garrison over a restricted area below, the duty of which was to repel assault and, by sortie, convince the enemy that he would, on all occasions of attack, suffer a deterrent loss. That they fully succeeded in their onerous and all-important task is proven by the presence in Great Britain to-day of by far the greater part of the British Expeditionary Force, now being rearmed for a continuance of the struggle. This action of the Royal Air Force was a battle within a battle. It was more than that. It was a victory within defeat.

Although the Allied air losses were heavy during the three weeks of battle in Flanders, those of the enemy must have been at least thrice that total. Their Junker 87B dive-bombers have been lost in hundreds, their Heinkels and Dorniers have been brought down in enormous quantities, and their Messerschmitts, both 109s and 110s, have incurred a staggeringly

severe punishment from our Hurricanes and Spitfires, as also from the French Curtiss squadrons. However big the Nazi Air Force was at the commencement of the Flanders battle, at the end of the battle it was seriously depleted ; and, while the material could fairly easily be replaced, the lost pilots and trained crews could not. Their loss constituted a grave blow to Germany.

CHAPTER 4

THE DIPLOMATIC WAR

BY W. HORSFALL CARTER

FOR the first seven months this Second German War was waged as much in the field of policy and prestige as by military means. Even when hell was let loose in the West it was noticeable that the achievements of German arms were largely a continuation of diplomatic and propagandist stratagems. In order to present the situation in perspective, therefore, the historian must record a period of intense political and diplomatic activity—featuring in many countries “the attack from within”—as prelude to the great carnage on the Western Front.

As Soviet Russia, not content with the political vassalage of the Baltic States through their submission to her demands for military, naval, and aerial bases, went on to work her will on Finland, Herr Hitler's Germany carried the war into Scandinavia and the Low Countries, and Signor Mussolini made ready to work mischief in the Mediterranean, the world had an object-lesson in the overriding considerations of strategy that govern inter-State relations. And the answering strategy called for was not the strong point of the British Government at the time. All the while the tide of war was advancing, engulfing one nation after another and smashing the flimsy barriers of neutrality and non-embroilment which diplomacy and international law had for generations been erecting.

After a diplomatic barrage on the Nazi model, the Government of the U.S.S.R. on November 30th sent its troops and aircraft across the Finnish border and sought to obtain by overwhelming force the concessions which it had failed to secure in six weeks of negotiation. The Russian demands were for a naval base on the Hangö peninsula, commanding the entrance to the Gulf of Finland ; Hogland and other islands at the eastern end of the Gulf ; Björko Island, Sound, and port commanding the entrance to the bay of Viipuri (Viborg)—and a new frontier running eastward to join the line where it crosses Lake Ladoga ; and a portion of the Rybachi peninsula, which would have the effect of placing the port of Petsamo, Finland's outlet to the Arctic Ocean, within reach of Russian guns.

† The Finnish Cabinet, reconstructed on December 2nd, declared its continued readiness to negotiate on any specific issue, but steadfastly maintained its claim to complete political independence. Its immediate reaction to the onslaught was to refer the matter to the League of Nations, invoking Articles XI and XV of the Covenant. Within a few days the Finnish Parliament had similarly sent out an appeal for the active help of other "civilized nations"—help which Finland had a right to expect, it was said, "as an outpost of Western civilization." It was to all appearances a perfectly straightforward case of aggression, such as spokesmen of the U.S.S.R. had often so eloquently denounced at Geneva, and the question of "Bolshevism" seemed to be neither here nor there. Nevertheless, M. Stalin thought fit to cover up his act of expansionist marauding by procuring the establishment, at Terijoki, of a rival "Finnish People's Government," headed by a certain M. Kuusinen, formerly a secretary of the Komintern. With this puppet Government Moscow at once announced the conclusion of a mutual assistance pact.

While the Russian action was characteristic of the old Imperialism at its worst, Finland was, in a sense, like the other Baltic States, a victim of her geographical position. For years past the suspicious zealots of the Kremlin had been haunted by the fear that the Intervention plans which had failed in 1918-20 might at any time be revived, and Finland, only twenty miles from Leningrad, become the jumping-off ground for an attack on the "Socialist sixth of the world." (In February 1937, M. Holsti, Finland's Foreign Minister, and subsequently Permanent Delegate at the League of Nations, had paid a special visit to Moscow to try to dispel that fear.) There was no doubt a great temptation to spike those hypothetical guns trained on Leningrad and at the same time to reinforce that mastery of the Baltic *vis-à-vis* Herr Hitler's Germany which the earlier diplomatic pressure on Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania had begun.

The Council and Assembly of the League duly met. It was decided straightaway that States members should give the utmost assistance in their power to the latest victim of aggression, and, at the same time, at the instigation of a number of South American States, headed by the Argentine, the Council on December 14th solemnly delivered notice of expulsion of the U.S.S.R. from the League. This excommunication scarcely seemed to square with the previous behaviour of an association which had sidestepped the appeals of Abyssinia, Czecho-Slovakia, and Republican Spain, and it was noticeable that Sweden (on behalf of the

Scandinavian trio) and Latvia (acting for the three Baltic States) abstained from voting the Resolution. Finland's close relations with the Scandinavian States was a recognized feature of international life ; yet, significantly, at a special conference held at Oslo on their way to Geneva the Foreign Ministers of these States had declared that they would abide by the traditional policy of " absolute neutrality." Later, when it was a question of responding to the appeal for assistance, they made it clear that, whatever help might be given to Finland in the way of war material and the enrolment of volunteers, they would resolutely refuse passage to any Allied forces seeking in this Northern diversion a breach in the German fortress.

At this stage, intervention in the Northern theatre of war was clearly no part of Anglo-French strategy. Whatever might be the implications of the Geneva resolutions, neither London nor Paris made any move to suggest that they considered themselves at war with the U.S.S.R. Even when a few weeks later Field-Marshal Mannerheim, Finland's trusted military leader, sent an S.O.S. for foreign aid in men as well as material, the expeditionary force which was made ready was at first not officially sponsored—it was formed on a volunteer basis in accordance with the technique of " non-intervention " practised in the Spanish war.

The German Government was noticeably embarrassed by the Russian campaign. It sought to cover its discomfiture, however, by a violent attack, in a semi-official Foreign Office statement, on the Scandinavian countries (Denmark excepted) for their failure in recent years to requite German sympathies. At the same time German agents joined with the Komintern propagandists in painting a lurid picture of Allied diplomacy moving heaven and earth to draw the small neutral States into the war on the side of Great Britain and France.

Actually, in December 1939, the relations of the Allies with these countries were distinctly strained. The British Order in Council of November 20th, declaring German exports carried in neutral vessels on the high seas liable to confiscation, was hitting their trade hard. It produced immediate protests from the Belgian, Danish, Dutch, and Japanese Governments ; and Germany naturally took occasion in a note communicated to the Press on December 6th to lecture the neutrals on their meek submission to the blockade. The Dutch Government, in particular, was scolded for not taking measures to arm its merchant ships or organize them in convoys.

In both Northern and Western Europe these tactics of intimidation

were on the whole a failure. Before the end of the month trade negotiations between the United Kingdom and Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, as well as Turkey and Roumania, were being actively pursued. In the Balkans, however, the shadow of the swastika appeared to be deepening, at the same time as there was a wave of apprehension at the apparent rebirth of Russian Imperialism. This was the cue for a new diplomatic initiative on the part of Fascist Italy. On December 8th the Fascist Grand Council issued its first war-time statement of policy, explicitly reaffirming the German-Italian Pact of Alliance ("the Pact of Steel") and giving notice of special interest in "everything that may happen in the Danube Basin and the Balkans." The Italian attitude was elaborated by her Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, in a speech to the Chamber of *Fasci* and Corporations on December 16th. The German-Italian Agreement, he said, was only designed to put relations between the two countries on the same footing as Anglo-French relations. A period of three to five years of peace had been anticipated during which they would have completed their internal reconstruction—and military preparations. When, however, despite Signor Mussolini's efforts to arrange a peaceful solution of the German-Polish dispute, the German war-machine was set in motion, Italy had done the best she could for her ally by proclaiming "non-belligerency." On the question of Russia, Count Ciano alleged that in their discussions the object had been no more than to neutralize her and prevent her from getting involved in the "encirclement" policy of the "peace-front" countries—at the same time letting out that the Russo-German Pact was known in Rome less than forty-eight hours in advance. No reference at all was made to the Russo-Finnish war.

There was unofficial evidence that Italy was making a bid for leadership of an anti-Communist crusade in South-Eastern Europe. It was distinctly awkward for her when early in December a consignment of war material for Finland, dispatched under Italian auspices, was held up in Germany by the Reich Government. The latter appeared to be torn at this time between the two allegiances. One or two ingenious German publicists resolved the difficulty, however, by grandiose plans for "Eurasian solidarity" (collaboration of Germany, Italy, U.S.S.R., and Japan) in opposition to the capitalist Powers of the West. Japan, since the beginning of the war, had shown little inclination to serve as Herr Hitler's stalking-horse, and her Government had shown marked disapproval of the German-Russian compact. However, at the end of the

year the Foreign Office in Tokyo was able to announce that the outstanding Russo-Japanese issues—the Kamschatka fisheries question and the Soviet claim against Manchukuo for payment of the final instalment due on the China Eastern Railway transaction—had been settled, and a week later Russo-Japanese trade talks opened in Moscow.

It looked now as if Signor Mussolini was hoping for valuable support from the Vatican for an "anti-Bolshevist" front. Some encouragement could be derived from the customary Papal address to the Sacred College of Cardinals on Christmas Eve, still more perhaps from the visit of Pope Pius XII to the Royal Palace of the Quirinal on December 28th. Another step along the same line of policy was the meeting of Count Ciano and the Foreign Minister of Hungary, Count Csaky, at Venice on January 6th. Hungary's attitude was traditionally anti-Soviet and at the same time pro-Italian, and she had some cause to be on the alert on account of recent threats broadcast over the Soviet radio that "the Soviets will never tolerate the existence of a second Finland in the Carpathians."

Presumably Count Ciano took occasion to give the Hungarian Foreign Minister some friendly advice about Roumania. Now that the Russian steam-roller was once more on the move and the old threat to Bessarabia was renewed—King Carol had just come out with a defiant speech at Chisinau—there was some reason to suppose that the Roumanian Government would be less intransigent about the future of the Transylvanian provinces; and, in her new rôle as protectress of the Balkans, Italy had begun to see the advantages of playing off one country against the other, as Germany had done so successfully in the past.

Underlying the more active policy pursued by Italy at the turn of the year was also a vague hope that, by some kind of return to the Four-Power Pact notion of 1933, the war might be "switched" into a Christian rally against atheistic Russia. Powerful influences were at work behind the scenes to try to construct a bridge between the Allies and Germany, and when on December 23rd President Roosevelt "reported present" with an announcement that he was sending Mr. Myron Taylor as his personal representative to the Vatican and a reference in a letter (December 23rd) to the Catholic Archbishop of New York to "our parallel endeavours for peace and the alleviation of suffering," it seemed for a moment that Signor Mussolini was on the right road.

War, however, possesses its own rhythm, its own impetus. And by the end of 1939 the early hesitation and fumbling of the democracies had given place to a sustained common effort which was not to be checked

or diverted by any mediators. Thus on December 12th a far-reaching agreement between the British and French Treasuries was announced, securing complete solidarity in the financial field as between the two countries and their Empires. For the duration of the war—and six months after—the sterling and franc currencies would operate freely without any occasion for gold payments, and neither country would impose restrictions on the imports of the other. Provision was also made for a joint expenses account for the prosecution of the war, and the essential point, said M. Reynaud, speaking in the French Senate, was that this agreement should pave the way to the reconstruction of Europe. This profession of faith was echoed by the French Prime Minister, M. Daladier, on the following day when he talked of the present Anglo-French co-operation as only a beginning and of the “federal bonds” which should be extended to other States. This process of unification of the Anglo-French war effort continued in the early months of 1940: by an arrangement on March 1st a common export policy was successfully negotiated; on March 9th an Anglo-French Industrial Council was set up; and shortly afterwards plans were laid for permanent liaison in the fields of colonial policy and education.

Another link in the chain of circumstances working against any premature peace was the British Empire scheme for training air pilots and air crews in Canada which was signed in Ottawa on December 17th by representatives of the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Substantial orders were at the same time placed in the U.S.A. by the British and French Governments for bombers, pursuit planes, flying-boats, and other war supplies. Meanwhile the Czecho-Slovakian National Committee in Paris headed by MM. Beneš and Osusky had been formally recognized by the French Government on December 17th. And the rapprochement with Turkey which had been effected was a guarantee that England and France would be actively engaged in the event of any trouble in the Balkans or Mediterranean.

Diplomatic happenings affecting the Americas included the incident of the pursuit by British cruisers of the German battleship, *Admiral Graf Spee*, which took refuge in Montevideo harbour. The British Minister had requested the Uruguayan Government, in accordance with international usage, either to intern the warship or order it to leave within twenty-four hours. Despite German protests the ship, after necessary repairs, received its sailing orders on December 18th and to escape capture was scuttled by its crew just outside the harbour. Though the

Uruguayan Government behaved correctly there was some heart-burning in South America about this invasion of the peace zone marked off at the 1939 Congress of the Pan-American Union, and the result was a joint protest from the U.S.A. and twenty other American Republics (on January 23rd, 1940) against all belligerent activity in American waters.

The U.S.A., moreover, had been perturbed about the British censorship of American mails sent in British or neutral ships. The official attitude of the British Government was that they had proofs of the existence of an organized traffic of contraband through the mail between Nazi sympathizers in the United States and Germany—apart from natural fears as to the possible transmission of military secrets, sabotage, etc. They could only promise that the examination of mails would not result in any innocent correspondence being confiscated or destroyed.

Unruffled by this diplomatic conflict, Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador, delivered a cogent address to the Chicago Council of Foreign Relations on January 4th on the pre-eminent issue of sea-power and, dealing with the question of post-war settlement, declared for "control of the seas on agreed principles by the democracies" as "the only foundation for a stable and liberal world." A few days later, as if to underline America's growing concern with European matters, the State Department appointed a Committee, with Mr. Sumner Welles as the chairman, to study economic problems created by the war and means for a re-adjustment after the restoration of peace.

Maintenance of the conventional rules of neutrality in European waters was proving to be a still more ticklish problem, with considerations of policy frequently impairing the efficacy of the British blockade. The outstanding example of this was the permission extended to Italy to continue to obtain her supplies of coal largely from Germany. At the beginning of March the British Ministry of Economic warfare took the decision to stop these German coal shipments, but on March 9th, following angry protests from Rome, the British Government saw fit to release the thirteen ships that had been detained, with their cargoes of coal, although maintaining the ban for the future.

For the smaller States striving to maintain the status of neutrality this was indeed a most unhappy time. They took exception to a challenge thrown out by Mr. Churchill in a broadcast on January 20th when, after a reference to their "lamentable plight," he exhorted them in so many words "with one spontaneous impulse to do their duty according to the League Covenant and stand together with the French

and British Empires against aggression and wrong." Dutch statesmen and publicists were particularly prominent in their objections to Mr. Churchill's advice. For the Scandinavian nations, moreover, there was the persistent shadow of the Russo-Finnish war. Spokesmen of the Swedish Government in particular made it clear that they were quite determined to continue to walk the tight-rope of neutrality. In a statement to the British Press, it is true, the Foreign Minister, Herr Günther, had gone so far as to declare that the Swedish people desired to do the utmost in their power to help the Finns.

"Finland's cause is ours . . . there is no use in trying to explain or to conceal this fact, as everyone sees the future of Sweden must, to a large extent, depend on the fate of Finland."

But the Government's policy remained firmly one of non-involvement. The Prime Minister, speaking in the Riksdag on January 17th, had laid it down that, while the Government were as much concerned to help Finland as the people, there could be no question of allowing Sweden to be used by belligerent troops either for transport or for the establishment of bases. King Gustav himself on February 19th made a statement to the Cabinet commending the voluntary assistance which his country had given to Finland in her heroic struggle but once again drawing the line at military intervention.

It was clearly to Germany's interest that Sweden should remain neutral, if only because of the extensive trade connexion, particularly the supply of high-grade iron ore¹ in the north. Transport of this ore through the eastern port of Lulea is possible only between May and October when the port is ice-free. The more important route is by rail through Norway to the port of Narvik. And for a Germany subjected to blockade by the British Fleet the "Great North Road" of the Norwegian coast was of vital importance. Discussions between the Allies and neutral Norway on the question of Germany's right to use this route had been proceeding for some time.

Matters came to a head with the *Altmark* incident of February 17th, which was characterized by the Norwegian Foreign Minister, M. Koht, "as the most gross violation of neutrality since the war began." For some time German ships, apart from bringing the supplies of Swedish iron ore, had been evading the British contraband control by securing free

¹ A useful statistical note on this subject is available in the *Bulletin of International News*, April 6th.

passage through Norwegian territorial waters. When it was learned that the *Altmark*, an auxiliary ship to the *Graf Spee*, was similarly taking advantage of this "covered way" to convey to Germany three hundred to four hundred British prisoners, the Admiralty decided to take action. The vessel was intercepted and took refuge in Joessing fjord, whither it was pursued by H.M.S. *Cossack*, boarded by a landing party, and the prisoners rescued. The Norwegian official case, stated in a series of Notes, was that as a warship the *Altmark* could not be interfered with—the right to visit did not carry with it the right to search. Reference was made to the 1938 neutrality regulation issued by the Scandinavian countries which, it was claimed, had been endorsed by the British Foreign Office in the summer of 1939. To this the British Government replied that the recognized right of entry into neutral territorial waters for the warship of a belligerent was specifically for the purpose of *innocent passage* and that the conveyance of prisoners—incidentally under conditions obnoxious to humanitarian feeling—could scarcely be said to come under that definition. While still refusing to admit the British standpoint, the Norwegian Government as strongly resisted advice from Germany that, because of the loss of so many ships by mines and torpedoes, they should forbid their ships to sail to Great Britain at all. Norway, that is to say, like Sweden, was intent on upholding the traditional doctrine of neutrality—"We claim free traffic for legal neutral trade."

This wrangle, unimportant in itself, has to be considered in relation to the disappointment of that section of opinion in Great Britain and France which was clamouring for the sending of a fully equipped expeditionary force to help Finland in her desperate resistance against superior numbers. (It was not known at the time that the Allied Supreme War Council had on February 5th actually decided in favour of such a force—some one hundred thousand men—which would be ready to go to Scandinavia, in accordance with Field-Marshal Mannerheim's appeal, before the end of April.) The Swedish and Norwegian Governments, however, maintained their refusal to allow passage for Allied forces other than volunteers, and in consequence the Finnish Government never got to the point of appealing for this official aid. Instead—after the Russians had breached the Mannerheim Line—the hard-pressed Finnish Cabinet enlisted the good offices of Sweden for the opening of peace negotiations. It was obvious that the German Government, which by this time was only too anxious that the Finnish conflict should be brought to an end, had

been all the time applying pressure upon Helsinki, and Dr. Svinhufvud, the veteran Finnish statesman who had always displayed pro-German sympathies, went to Berlin to receive his instructions much as the unhappy President Hacha had made the journey a year before. Peace was finally made in Moscow on March 12th and ratified by the Finnish Parliament on March 15th by 145 votes to 3. The terms of peace, though not perhaps Carthaginian, were sufficiently severe. Finland had to surrender the whole of the Karelian Isthmus, including the towns of Viipuri and Sortavala, the shore round the west, south, and north-eastern part of Lake Ladoga, the whole of Viipuri bay with its islands, and a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland. In addition, the Hangö peninsula and a certain area surrounding it were to be leased to the Soviet Government for thirty years at an annual rent of 8 million marks, and Finland was compelled to agree to the establishment there of a Soviet military base with a garrison and air units. Russia claimed also the right of free transit for her citizens through the Petsamo region into Norway, and the right to send goods to and from Norway free from control and without paying any transit duties. On the other hand, the Soviet forces undertook to evacuate the Petsamo area which they had occupied, thus leaving the famous nickel mines in Finnish territory and to drop completely the egregious M. Kuusinen—in fact, to refrain from interference in Finland's domestic affairs.

The general opinion in the outside world was that in the face of Sweden's and Norway's stubborn neutrality the Finnish cause was lost. At the same time it was clearly not to Russia's interest to become further involved in a theatre of war where at any moment Germany might be tempted to strike. Her firm resolve to act as a check on Germany's ambitions in the Baltic area, however, was seen in the veto she imposed on the suggestion, emanating from Finland, for a military defensive alliance of the Scandinavian countries. At the same time the uneasy partnership initiated in the Russo-German Pact of August 1939 continued to bear its fruit. It was announced on February 7th that the work of establishing and marking the German-Russian frontier was now complete, and on February 12th a new Russo-German commercial treaty was signed in Moscow providing for an exchange of goods to the value of 1,000 million marks. Although the German military authorities were evidently still persuaded that the U.S.S.R. would prove an inexhaustible storehouse of supplies, it was clear that transport arrangements were still far from satisfactory. German engineers were therefore being enlisted to

give expert assistance, and at the end of January it became known that, by arrangement with the Russian Government, a contingent of the German forces was to occupy the south of that part of Poland which Russia had annexed, to develop oil production in the former Polish Galicia and control the railway line that goes through to the Roumanian frontier.

Apart from the oil Germany hoped to obtain from Russia, her principal source of petroleum was, of course, Roumania. The Roumanian oil wells produce 6,200,000 metric tons a year. They are worked by foreign companies with capital obtained in the main from London, Paris, and New York. King Carol's Government was subject to constant pressure to increase the quantity of oil exports to Germany from the figure of 130 tons monthly which had been fixed by the German-Roumanian Trade Treaty of December 21st. That pressure, however, was successfully resisted—and, in fact, owing to the extremely severe winter Germany was only receiving about a tenth of that amount. On January 19th a General Commissariat for oil had been created in Bucharest, as an element in the policy of "armed independence," and as long as the war situation in the West was more or less a deadlock King Carol could skilfully play off one side against the other. If, moreover, the German hunger for oil led them to try a swoop through Hungary on the oil fields he personally knew that the Allies had made all the necessary arrangements for destroying them, as they were destroyed in the last war. The presence of a powerful Allied army in Syria, ready to intervene, should the war spread to south-eastern Europe, also acted as a powerful deterrent. German policy at this time was confined, therefore, to extracting from Roumania as much of her raw materials as she could—at the same time offering her good offices for a non-aggression pact between Roumania and Russia so that the issue of Bessarabia might not be forced.

The U.S.S.R. had apparently at the time no intention of indulging in any smash-and-grab raids in the Balkans. In a speech to the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union on March 29th M. Molotov did indeed make a pointed reference to Bessarabia, but it seemed that Russia, having disposed of Finland, was only too glad to return to the original policy of freedom of action and the avoidance of "entanglements" while the "capitalist" nations exhausted themselves in war. This left the field fairly clear for Germany, provided only she could make her policy dovetail in with that of Italy. In those countries such as Roumania, Czecho-Slovakia (not to speak of Hungary), which were dependent so much on

Germany's trade, a revival of the Axis presented little difficulty, and when the German Ministers in the Balkan capitals were summoned to Berlin on January 29th their instructions no doubt were to give their support to the idea of the maintenance of "neutrality" in South-Eastern Europe, leaving Italy to exert what influence she could upon States, like Hungary and Bulgaria, having territorial claims, to be patient until Herr Hitler and his associates had won the war.

The Balkan Entente met in conference on February 2nd at Belgrade, its object being, it was said, to deal with economic problems arising out of the war and to consolidate the stabilized situation. In the communiqué with which the Conference ended it was announced that the Balkan pact would be prolonged for seven years from February 9th, 1940, and that the next ordinary session of the Permanent Council (the Foreign Ministers of Yugoslavia, Roumania, Greece, and Turkey) would be held in Athens in February 1941. At a banquet given by the Yugoslavian Foreign Minister, M. Gafencu (Roumania) went out of his way to commend the friendly attitude of Italy "which has been like a beacon before our own aspirations for peace, order, and security." A trade agreement between Italy and Turkey announced on February 10th may be considered to have offset the discomfiture experienced in the Reich when eighty German specialists were expelled and their contracts cancelled under a recent emergency law.

That the German-Italian combination was still operating in accordance with a "twin-stroke" policy became clear when at the end of February Mr. Sumner Welles arrived in Europe on a special exploratory mission on behalf of President Roosevelt. Although on his return to America Mr. Welles "stated categorically" that he had not received any peace plans or proposals from any belligerent or from any other Government, his coming and going between Berlin and Rome—with only brief visits to London and Paris—suggested that Herr Hitler was seizing the opportunity to make known his minimum peace terms. Nothing in the way of an official communication was made but, using the technique of which they are masters, the Germans contrived to "put over" through publicity channels associated with the Vatican an eleven-point peace plan. The terms afforded an interesting indication of Herr Hitler's mind:

1. General disarmament on land, sea, and in the air.
2. The formation of a small independent Poland round Warsaw, with a population of about 10 millions, and with Gdynia a Polish port giving access to the Baltic. The Poles would have free access to the port of

Danzig, Polish commerce to the Baltic would be made easier and the boundaries of the new Polish State would be determined by plebiscite under an international commission. Minority problems would be solved in the Danubian and Polish zones by mass emigrations.

3. Czechs, Slovaks, and Hungarians would form a triune State, allied with the Reich, in which Germany would hold certain rights over industry and communications for twenty-five years.

4. Austria would remain within the Reich.

5. Germany would get back her colonies within twenty-five years, or at least certain colonial concessions or protection for German emigration to certain zones in Africa.

6. A Danubian confederation would be formed, with the participation of Germany and Italy as the "guardian" Powers, and would include Yugoslavia, Roumania, Slovakia, Hungary, and Bohemia and Moravia.

7. The *status quo* in the Balkans would be maintained, and certain frontiers, such as those of Bessarabia and Transylvania, would be guaranteed.

8. The Jews still left in Germany would emigrate, under the direction of Great Britain to Palestine, under that of Italy to East Africa, and under that of France to Madagascar.

9. Absolute freedom of trade would be established; no tariff barriers for raw materials and direct contact for economic collaboration with the United States.

10. Italian commerce would receive special treatment in Jibuti and free passage through the Suez Canal.

11. Italians in Tunisia would receive a new status.

Another interesting statement defining *Lebensraum* was issued at this time (March 6th) by the German Legation at the Hague—presumably to impress Mr. Welles :

"Economically, it is an area big enough and varied enough in its economic composition to enable the people of it to live in a style appropriate to the twentieth century, provided they diplomatically work with and for one another. They must be able to live in their area fairly independent of the economic policy of the great capitalists who control raw materials, and also independently of other great spheres of life.

"Strategically, it is an area big enough and secure enough from the standpoint of energy, food, and raw material to prevent the people concerned from involuntarily becoming the tools of

other great maritime Powers which possess hegemony and which otherwise would have the power of life and death over them.

"Diplomatically, it is an area in which the separate States trust and understand one another as good neighbours in their mutual needs, co-operate politically, and give one another the assurance that none of the participants will pursue a policy of enmity or alliance against any of the others, and particularly not in collaboration with or as the instrument of outsiders."

The general trend of Herr Hitler's ideas was underlined in an important article in the *Börsen Zeitung* by Dr. Megerle who drew a perhaps specious analogy between the German plans for Europe and the American Monroe doctrine. In any case Mr. Welles must have carried back with him from Europe the conviction that there was not the slightest possibility of finding a *modus vivendi* between the Allies and Germany.

Having played the peace card without success, Herr Hitler now sent Herr von Ribbentrop to Rome where he had conversations with Signor Mussolini and the King of Italy (and an audience with the Pope) and was able, in Signor Gayda's words, to inform the Government about Germany's intentions after the first six months of the war, "on the eve of a more intensive phase of movement which is expected with the arrival of the spring." Nazi diplomacy was concerned to reconcile the Italians to Germany's Russian policy and to forge a joint Italo-German guarantee for the peaceful ordering of the Balkans. At the same time the necessary arrangements were made by economic experts for diverting to land routes the supplies of coal from Germany. Herr von Ribbentrop's function was principally, it turned out, to prepare the way for another meeting of the two dictators.

On March 18th Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini duly met in a curtained train on the Brenner Pass and in a conversation lasting two and a half hours they concerted their strategy for the spring campaign. The Italian press now became eloquent again about the relations between Italy and Germany. It was emphasized that Italy's policy continued to revolve within the frame of the Axis, the Italo-German treaty, and the relevant Agreements, and some of the writers were at pains to define precisely what they implied in these three expressions "Axis," "Alliance," "Agreements." The Axis, it was explained, referred to common ends of an ideological and political nature; the Alliance signified the diplomatic undertakings binding the two peoples; while the Agreements related to the conditions and means according to which

those reciprocal undertakings were to be carried into effect. Signor Gayda was a little more specific when he wrote that the solidarity between Rome and Berlin aimed at two essential ends :

“ the construction of a juster Europe founded truly upon parity of the rights and means of the nations ; and the defence of Italian interests, concretely regarded and defended within the frame of this Europe beside the defence of the German interests.” These interests, he concluded, “ directly concerned with the developments in Europe and the world of war- and peace-time, ought to be fitted into the frame of the Italo-German alliance, and such was the ‘ essential object ’ of the Brenner meeting.”

The world did not have long to wait for the thunder and lightning. After the usual diplomatic barrage German military preparations began on a large scale. The only question was where the War-God would strike—in the Balkans, at the Low Countries, or over the body of Sweden to safeguard Germany's indispensable supplies of iron ore. It was anybody's guess. Twice already the alarm had sounded on the frontiers of Belgium and Holland—on November 10th, just after the joint message of King Leopold and Queen Wilhelmina issued from the Hague, and then again in the middle of January, when plans for a German invasion were found on an aviator who had the misfortune to come down in Belgium. On this latter occasion a state of siege was declared in part of the province of North Holland and on the coast of South Holland, while in Belgium full control was assumed by the Army Chiefs, with King Leopold taking over supreme command himself.

As regards the Balkans, the conditions of chronic uncertainty there had been accentuated by reports of British preparations to blow up the oil dumps and other establishments on the banks of the Danube near the Iron Gates to forestall a German invasion. This produced a suggestion in the *Pester Lloyd* of April 10th that the Danubian countries should get together and form an international river police to safeguard their river. (The Foreign Ministry in Budapest ten days later made this suggestion its own.) Something had to be done to counter the German demand that Nazi gunboats should be allowed to enter the territorial waters of the riparian States and take under their own protection the oil and food supplies for the Reich. Eventually, on April 17th, the International Danube Commission took the formal decision that each State should be responsible for policing its own waters ; nevertheless, a number of

armoured German patrol vessels disguised to look like barges duly made their appearance on the Lower Danube—and the stage was set for an extension of the war at any time to South-Eastern Europe.

Evidence of the high tension was shown by Mr. Chamberlain's statement in Parliament on April 2nd relating to important decisions of the Allied Supreme War Council which had met on March 28th and the steps being taken to intensify the economic warfare. The official declaration on that action read as follows :

" The Government of the French Republic and His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland mutually undertake that during the present war they will neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement.

" They undertake not to discuss peace terms before reaching complete agreement on the conditions necessary to ensure to each of them an effective and lasting guarantee of their security.

" Finally, they undertake to maintain, after the conclusion of peace, a community of action in all spheres for so long as may be necessary to safeguard their security and to effect the reconstruction, with the assistance of other nations, of an international order which will ensure the liberty of peoples, respect for law, and the maintenance of peace in Europe."

After commenting on this pronouncement Mr. Chamberlain went on :

" The picture which is presented to the Allies by the present situation is of a Germany putting her own interpretation on the obligations of neutrals, and accompanying it by threats of the dire consequences which might result to them from failure to comply with German demands. This problem which Germany has raised of a double standard of neutrality is one which we and the neutrals now have to face.

" The policy of the Allies has been determined by a scrupulous regard for neutral rights, whereas Germany has not hesitated to destroy neutral property and murder the nationals of neutral States, whenever it suited her policy to do so. She has not scrupled to threaten the invasion of neutral countries in order to prevent them taking steps to assist their neighbours against aggression or to protect their own interests.

" All the war trade agreements into which we have entered contain stipulations regulating the exports of neutral countries' own domestic produce to Germany. For example, these stipulations provide for the strict limitation of the export to Germany of the fats essential to her war effort.

"Another weapon in our armoury is that of purchase. It is obviously out of the question to purchase the entire exportable surplus of Germany's neighbours, but concentration on certain selected commodities such as minerals, fats, and oils is to an ever-increasing extent reducing the supply of these commodities available for Germany."

In the end the blow fell where least expected. In the early hours of April 9th German forces invaded Denmark and Southern Norway, while her diplomatic representatives called on the Governments of these two countries to acknowledge the protection of the Reich. It was known that during the Finnish war Germany had had 400,000 troops under arms and ready to embark in the Baltic zone with a fleet of flat-bottomed boats and ships normally berthed at Bremen and Hamburg. More than once she had threatened that, if Great Britain interfered with the Norwegian iron-ore traffic, these forces would be used to secure German interests. The pretext given for this occupation of strategic points in Scandinavia was thus the action of the Allies only a day or two before in laying minefields off the Norwegian coast.

A significant passage in the official statement notifying the Norwegian Government of this mine-laying ran as follows :

"... Germany has announced that she regards herself as entitled to destroy any neutral ship *en route* to any British port, including contraband control harbours, and there have, moreover, been repeated cases of vessels being destroyed on voyage between two neutral ports, when the vessel had no intention of touching at a British port at all. It is obvious that the German Government are engaged in an indiscriminate campaign of destruction throughout the waters in which their unnotified mines are laid, or in which their submarines are in a position to operate."

"Germany was flagrantly violating neutral rights," it went on, "in order to damage the Allied countries, while insisting upon the strictest observance of rules of neutrality whenever such observance would provide advantage to herself. It had been observed that a heavy proportion of the losses inflicted had fallen on Norwegian shipping; yet Germany continued to demand from the Norwegian Government the fullest use of Norwegian territorial waters, and the Norwegian Government had even been obliged to provide armed escort in their own waters for German ships. . . . The Allied Governments felt unable to acquiesce any longer in this state of affairs and had therefore given notice that they

reserved the right to take such measures as were necessary to prevent Germany from obtaining in Norway resources or facilities for war purposes." The Norwegian authorities, as it happened, had at once lodged a protest against this "open breach of international law and violation by force of Norwegian sovereignty and neutrality," their attitude being strongly endorsed in Stockholm. At an afternoon session of the Storting Professor Koht used these strong words about the Allied Note :

"These violations are carried out solely because they have the power to do so. The Western Powers are carrying the war into Norwegian territory because they think they can more easily win the war by doing so."

Whereupon, in a Memorandum sent from Berlin to the Norwegian and Danish Governments, the German Government was at pains to demonstrate that the Allies were intent on widening the theatre of war ; that they had chosen the small States as their victims to carry out these plans ; that during the Finnish conflict France and Britain openly proclaimed their determination to use the territories of the Northern countries for their operations in accordance with their needs ; that the German Government was now in possession of "irrefutable documents" proving that Britain and France had intended to occupy certain districts of the Northern States within the next few days—and so on in this vein. Herr von Ribbentrop had called together the foreign Press representatives in Berlin and spoken in the same sense. Danish and Norwegian journalists in the capital, meanwhile, had been summoned to a Press conference, informed that Germany had taken their countries under protection, and then detained in the building.

Denmark offered no resistance to German occupation. In Norway, on the other hand, in spite of the establishment for a brief while of a puppet Government under a certain Vikdun Quisling, King Haakon and his Government announced their determination to do everything in their power to resist the German invader.

Immediately the news of the invasion was communicated to London the British Foreign Office issued a declaration of full support for the Norwegian cause. It was amplified in a statement made to Parliament by Mr. Chamberlain in the following terms :

"Ever since the beginning of the war Germany has attempted to dominate Scandinavia and to control both the political and

economic policy of the Scandinavian States. Her pressure on them has been steadily increasing, and, as is now well known, she claimed and exercised the right to dictate their policy towards Finland during the war with Russia."

The Prime Minister went on to recall his previous comment on March 19th when he pointed out that

"nothing would save Norway and Sweden but a determination to defend themselves and to join with others who were ready to help them . . . since then the situation had further developed. Germany had claimed and exercised the right to destroy neutral ships on the seas round Great Britain, but at the same time had insisted on the strictest observation of the rules of neutrality where this would provide some advantage to her. The Allies had then decided to redress the balance thus weighted against them by laying mines in Norwegian waters, but at no time did they contemplate any occupation of Scandinavian territory so long as it was not attacked by Germany."

A series of naval engagements followed—the most notable of which took place at Narvik in the north of Norway. The British Air Force was also extremely active. German troops effected landings, however, at Narvik, Trondheim, Bergen, Stavanger, and Egersund. On April 15th the landing of a British force also at several points was officially announced. Nevertheless, by means of long-prepared Fifth Column attentions and stratagems, almost breath-taking in their audacity and cunning, Oslo and the chief ports very soon fell into German hands, and, although guerrilla warfare continued for some time, within three weeks the Reich was in full control of all except an area in the far north where Allied forces had managed to retain a foothold. Owing to lack of air bases and supporting aircraft in sufficient quantity the Allies could not hope to make a success of the campaign on which they had engaged, and in a statement to Parliament on May 2nd and May 7th and 8th Government spokesmen were compelled to announce a withdrawal from the ports of Namsos and Andalsnes, north and south of the key-point of Trondheim.

In his interim statement on May 2nd Mr. Chamberlain disclosed that the risks of hostile action in the Mediterranean or South-Eastern Europe were an important factor in the Government's decision.

"We have no intention," he said, "of allowing Norway to become merely a sideshow, but neither are we going to be trapped

into such dispersal of our forces as would leave us dangerously weak at the vital centre. We know that our enemy holds a central position. They have immense forces always mounted ready for attack, and the attack can be launched with lightning rapidity in any one of many fields. We know that they are prepared and would not scruple to invade Holland or Belgium or both. Or it may be that their savage hordes will be hurled against their innocent neighbours in the south-east of Europe. They might well do more than one of these things in preparation for an attempt at a large-scale attack on the Western Front or even a lightning swoop on this country. . . .

"It would be foolish indeed to reveal to the enemy our conception of the strategy best calculated to secure their defeat. But this can be said, for it is obvious, that we must not so disperse or tie up our forces as to weaken our freedom of action in vital emergencies which may at any moment arise. We must seize every chance as we have done and shall continue to do in Norway to inflict damage upon the enemy, but we must not allow ourselves to forget the long-term strategy which will win the war."

In spite of a powerful speech by Mr. Churchill in defence of the Government's actions—in which he maintained the view that the invasion of Norway by Herr Hitler had been "a cardinal political and strategical error"—there was intense dissatisfaction among all sections of British opinion. Speeches in the debate on May 7th and 8th brought evidence of fatal hesitations and divided counsels in high quarters as also of regrettable muddle and inefficiency in the equipment of the forces sent to Norway. The upshot of these events was a first-class political crisis resulting in the resignation of Mr. Chamberlain on May 10th. Mr. Churchill was immediately called upon to form an all-party Ministry. M. Reynaud in France also took the opportunity to broaden the basis of his Government by the inclusion of two representatives of the Right parties, M. Louis Marin and M. Ybarnégaray.

The war had opened up with a vengeance, and the garments of neutrality in which the lesser States of Europe still clothed their fears were wearing very thin. In Sweden and in Belgium, however, the same old language was used in official pronouncements. Thus the Prime Minister of Sweden in a speech in connexion with the May Day processions declared :

"We Swedes know that our Northern sister-nations loved, and still love, peace as strongly as we do, and that they had no

more aggressive designs against other nations than we have. None the less, they have not been spared from being drawn into the war. The Northern system has been broken up—for how long we do not know. . . . But in spite of all we look forward to a new day when the free nations of the North can together resume their peaceful work. . . . Our neutrality is firm and clear in all directions, and we are determined to assert and defend it with all the means in our power.”

A Berlin News Agency seized the occasion to announce that in the second half of April an exchange of views had taken place by letter between Herr Hitler and the King of Sweden, reaffirming the full agreement of the two Governments on their future political attitude to each other. M. Spaak in the Belgian Senate on April 16th testified that his Government's policy was still that set forth in King Leopold's declaration in October 1936—i.e. a policy of armed neutrality, which included, however, an undertaking given to the Allies that Belgium would defend her frontiers against any possible aggression. “Our policy is justified,” he said, “by the general desire to avoid being once more the battlefield of Europe.”

In the Balkan countries the leaders were still walking warily, their actions being dictated to a great extent by the swaying fortunes of the Norwegian campaign. There was not much doubt that Governments and public opinion in Roumania, Yugoslavia, Greece—and even Hungary—were longing for some definite and intensive action by the Allies to counter the persistent attentions of Germany. When the British diplomatic envoys in the Balkan countries, Hungary, and Turkey, were recalled to London for special consultation at the end of March it really seemed as if at long last something was to be done. And, indeed, on April 4th the announcement of a new Government-aided trading company—the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation Ltd.—was an encouragement which was badly needed. British policy, it was explained, was to strengthen the Balkan countries economically and politically to enable them to become really independent entities capable of resisting outside pressure—in other words to carry further the process which had been successful with Turkey. Mr. Chamberlain's statement in Parliament on April 18th, when the discussion with the Ambassadors had been concluded, was singularly lame and uninspiring, however. It hardly seemed the moment to tell the world that the object of British policy was the “preservation of peace and the promotion of security”

in the Balkans and Danubian countries and that "any one of these States has no cause to fear that the Allies or their forces will ever threaten their independence or integrity" !

The Germans meanwhile were redoubling their efforts. Their agents were roaming all over Yugoslavia, journalists on special mission and tourists swarming like ants on the pretext of the Belgrade Fair, numbers of them provided with diplomatic German passports and bringing with them large trunks which they duly deposited at the Consulates. The Yugoslav Government summoned up the courage to introduce measures expelling undesirable foreigners after a raid on the house of the former Prime Minister, M. Stoyadinovič, where they claimed to have found documents proving that he and his associates had been preparing a political *coup* in the German interest. M. Stoyadinovič was arrested and placed under detention. In Roumania and Hungary also the Governments took action against the increasing German interference. And, as so often before, the Governments in South-Eastern Europe, in despair of getting any effective help from the West, sought to check German influence by paying court to Italy. On March 21st Roumania announced a new trade agreement with Italy. Count Telcki proceeded to Rome at the end of March, and a communiqué following the conversations with Signor Mussolini and Count Ciano reaffirmed "the collaboration between the two countries on the basis of the Pact of Friendship which is now thirteen years old and has been tested by events." It was emphasized in Rome and in Budapest that Hungary abated none of her revisionist claims, but that with her thousand-year-old traditions she knew how to be patient and could afford to wait.

The new British Government succeeded to an appalling inheritance, and it was not more than half-formed when Herr Hitler struck again. On May 10th, without, of course, any warning or conventional declaration of war, German troops, with the usual plentiful supply of accompanying aircraft, invaded Belgium and Holland. There was the *obligato* official Memorandum accusing Belgians and Dutch of conniving at a prospective Allied attack on Germany through the Low Countries and the same technique with the Press as on the occasion of the spring on Norway and Denmark. The memorandum read as follows :

"1. Since the outbreak of the war Belgian and Dutch newspapers had even surpassed the British and French in their anti-German attitude. In spite of German *démarches* this attitude had remained unchanged to this day.

" 2. The Dutch, in conjunction with Belgian quarters, had allowed their territory to be used for British Secret Service attempts to stir up a revolution in Germany. The British Intelligence Service, working in a gross violation of the neutrality of these two countries, had the most far-reaching assistance of Dutch and Belgian Civil Service and General Staff quarters. These activities had no other aim but the removal of the Führer and the Reich Government, and the replacing of it by a Government in Germany willing to bring about the dissolution of the unity of the Third Reich.

" 3. The military preparations of the Belgian and Dutch Governments gave undeniable proof of the true intentions of Belgian and Dutch policy.

" 4. Belgium, for instance, had only fortified its frontier against Germany, while there were no fortifications whatsoever on the frontier with France. Repeated *démarches* by Germany about that point were always answered by the Belgian Government with the promise to remove this one-sided state of affairs, but in practice nothing was done.

" 5. The same open and unfortified gate of invasion for the British Air Force was the Dutch coastal area. Since the outbreak of the war British airmen appeared almost daily over German territory, coming *via* Holland. A total of 127 such British violations of Dutch territory could be ascertained beyond doubt and the Royal Dutch Government was notified. In fact the total was far greater.

" 6. Still further proof of the true attitude of the Belgian and Dutch Governments was the mobilization directed exclusively against Germany.

" 7. This massing of Belgian and Dutch troops on the German frontier was carried out at a time when Germany had no troops concentrated on her frontier facing Belgium and Holland. England and France, on the other hand, had collected a strongly mobilized army of invasion on the Belgian-French frontier.

" 8. Documents available to the Reich Government proved that the preparations of England and France for an attack against Germany made on Belgian and Dutch territory had reached a very advanced stage.

" 9. In spite of the fact that the Belgian Foreign Minister had had his attention repeatedly drawn to this attitude, nothing was changed. On the contrary, the Belgian Minister for Defence recently made a public declaration in the Belgian Chamber which contained the admission that everything was agreed upon by the General Staffs of Belgium, France, and England for common operation against Germany.

“ 10. If the Belgians and Dutch said that this development was not according to their intentions, but only to their helplessness, and that Britain and France forced them to take up this attitude, it could not be regarded as valid. Above all, it altered nothing in the given facts.”

Troop-carrying planes used on an unprecedented scale, and squads of parachutists, were a potent means of demoralization of the civilian population of the invaded countries, and, as in the case of Norway, a bunch of native traitors and resident Germans were all ready and trained to play their parts. In this way the famous water defences of the Dutch were circumvented, and within a fortnight, after losing the whole of the Air Force and a substantial part of the Army, the Dutch Commander-in-Chief found himself compelled to lay down his arms. Meanwhile the thrust through Belgium to the Channel ports was gathering momentum every day, and German heavy tanks and motorized columns poured through a gap made in the French defences near Sedan. This was nothing short of a military disaster for the Allies. It had a galvanic effect on French opinion. Overnight M. Reynaud called Marshal Pétain into the Government, and General Weygand was appointed Commander-in-Chief in the field to supersede General Gamelin. In a remarkably frank speech to the Senate on May 21st M. Reynaud rose to the occasion and announced the French determination to fight to the last.

“ How have we got to this point ? ” he said. “ Is the moral value of our Army in doubt ? Not at all. The fighting which took place in Belgium during the first days proved it. The truth is that our classic conception of the conduct of war has come up against a new conception. At the basis of this conception there is not only the massive use of heavy armoured divisions and co-operation between them and aeroplanes, but the creation of disorder in the enemy’s rear by means of parachute raids which in Holland nearly caused the fall of The Hague and in Belgium seized the strongest fort of Liège. I will not speak to you of the false news and the orders given by means of the telephone to the civil authorities with the object, for example, of causing hurried evacuations.

“ The Senate will understand that of all the tasks which confront us the most important is clear thinking. We must think of the new type of warfare which we are facing and take immediate decisions. This surprise is not the first that we have suffered and then overcome in the course of our history. At the beginning of the last war there was the handicap which we suffered from lack of

heavy artillery and a too small number of machine-guns. We suffered the rude surprise of the treacherous gas weapon, and yet we hit back, we adapted ourselves and so ended masters of the situation.

"It will be the same thing today if each one of us wills it; if every soldier understands the immense rôle he plays, if each workman now working twelve hours a day bends over his machinery with ever more intense energy and if every man and every woman understands the greatness of the hour in which we are living. They are beginning to understand abroad. There are, far off, millions of men, women, and children who begin to understand that it is a question of themselves and their future. May they not understand too late. . . . These two great peoples, these two Empires, united as one, cannot be beaten. France cannot die. As for me, if I were told tomorrow that only a miracle could save France I should reply, 'I believe in miracles, because I believe in France.'"

The Belgian Army was very badly battered and unable to resist the new military technique. Germany's skill in working on the weak joints in her opponents' psychological armour was seen once again in the capitulation of the King of the Belgians and the Army under his command on May 27th. The effect of this unforeseen defection was to isolate the British and French divisions which had gone into Flanders to the help of Belgium, and in the face of the massive superiority in fire and air power of the German forces there was nothing for it but to withdraw this section of the British Expeditionary Force from the port of Dunkirk which alone at this time remained in the hands of the Allies.

The effect of the German occupation of the Low Countries on the Great Powers that had still contrived to keep out of the war may well be imagined. In Rome, as the news of the supposed domination of the British Fleet by the German air power operating in the Norwegian theatre of war came through, there had been jubilation, and attacks in the Press on England and France had become more and more frequent and violent. As a consequence, on April 30th the British Government issued orders that all mercantile shipping should be diverted, temporarily, to the Cape route. A further sign of Mediterranean tension was the transfer of the British Fleet to the harbour of Alexandria on May 4th. Spokesmen of the Italian Government, not content with previous declarations that their country's non-belligerency was in line with the German-Italian alliance, now began to talk openly of Italy's state of pre-belligerency. Signor Gayda was found, characteristically, gloating that 1,200,000 men,

maintained on the borders of Italy and her colonies, constituted "solid and silent help to Herr Hitler." The weekly review, *Relazioni Internazionale*, declared that

"in deciding on Italy's action in the war all moral scruples must be resolutely thrust aside. The moment decisions came there was no room for cowards or persons afflicted with moral preoccupations. The Italian people was awaiting Signor Mussolini's order which would enable it to break its chains in the Mediterranean, have access to the ocean, and thus win well-being and power for the Empire."

Another ominous sign of the times was the campaign launched against the Vatican organ, the *Osservatore Romano*, as the one paper in the Italian language which sought to give news and views from the Allied as well as the totalitarian side. Official circles in London still refused to believe that Signor Mussolini's policy would be in line with the vituperation of the controlled Press. They took comfort from the fact that a special envoy, Mr. Playfair, was still negotiating on trade matters with the Italian representatives, and Sir Wilfred Greene, Master of the Rolls, was sent on a special mission to Rome to secure an agreement on the Italian grievances arising out of the blockade. It was reported that a satisfactory compromise had been achieved, but within a few days the agreement reached in principle was repudiated by the Italian Government. Once again "appeasement" had brought forth Dead Sea fruit. Signor Mussolini had decided.

Fears were expressed that after the latest German successes the pro-German section in Japan would be tempted to get the bit between their teeth and press for action against the Dutch East Indies. In a statement to the Japanese Foreign Minister on May 22nd the German Ambassador declared that his Government was not interested in the Netherlands East Indies problem. This was tantamount, as it happened, to giving Japan "a blank power of attorney"—to use the phrase of the newspaper *Kokumin*. The Japanese Cabinet, however, was resolved at this time to maintain the policy of non-involvement. No doubt, however, this would be a lever by which they might compel British acquiescence in Japan's China policy. The United States meanwhile had declared for maintenance of the *status quo* in the Far East—and had transferred the bulk of her fleet to the Pacific.

As it became clear that Britain and France were in mortal danger

those Americans whose sympathies were entirely on the side of the Allies demanded an ever-speedier production of aircraft and munitions and facilities for their prompt sale to Britain. The Argentine Foreign Ministry, too, was on record as urging discreetly that the Latin-American Republics might have to "think again" and see to it that a policy of "co-ordinated vigilance" replace the simple legal conception of neutrality. Immediately the news of Germany's march into the Low Countries became known, Switzerland ordered general mobilization. Other States, unable to resist German power, sought only to redress the balance by establishing closer relations with the U.S.S.R. A trade and navigation treaty was signed with Yugoslavia in Moscow on May 11th. Sweden, in particular, was responsive to Russia's offer of closer relations. After the Allied withdrawal from Central Norway Swedish communication westward might be said to be completely cut off, and she could expect to secure her indispensable raw materials only from Russia. On May 6th, over the Moscow radio, there was a joint Russo-German declaration that both countries were interested in the maintenance of Swedish neutrality. Whether sincerely or as a ruse, the Kremlin even let it be known in London that they would welcome discussions for expanding trade with England, and after a period of hesitation on both sides the Churchill Government boldly dispatched Sir Stafford Cripps as Ambassador on special mission to Moscow. Simultaneously Sir Samuel Hoare was sent off to try his hand at "appeasement" in Spain—to avert the peril of General Franco's Government being dragged by Spain's Pact with Italy into a Mediterranean conflict.

The period under review closes with a big question-mark. Were the Allies capable of recovery on the battlefields of France sufficiently to impress the opportunist Governments in Rome and Moscow—and so remove the danger of a hostile land-block from Antwerp to Vladivostock? On this factor, belonging to the sphere of *imponderabilia*, would depend the issue of the war.

CHAPTER 5

PARLIAMENT AND THE WAR

BY VERNON BARTLETT, M.P.

PARLIAMENT, when it reassembled ten days before the declaration of war on Germany, was already in its fifth year and, in normal circumstances, would probably have been dissolved within a few months. Earlier in the year, before the international crisis over Danzig and over German threats to Poland had reached a climax, there had, in fact, been much speculation in political circles, based mainly on considerations of Party advantage, as to whether there would be a general election in the latter part of 1939 or in the spring of 1940. The outbreak of war prolonged the life of Parliament for, apparently, an indefinite period, and also caused other striking changes. A moribund House of Commons suddenly came to active life again; mere Party considerations were for the most part thrust into the background; and the Government had, with but a few insignificant exceptions, the united support of the Members of both Houses.

This reinvigorated Parliament was destined to be most eventful. Mr. Neville Chamberlain's Administration, though assured in the main of the support of the two Opposition Parties, was not, and in the circumstances could not be, a Government of complete co-operation between all the Parties and of the full collaboration of the ablest minds in Parliament. Notwithstanding a general endorsement of the policy of war, a Government composed solely of representatives of particular, closely allied political Parties could not, in the very nature of things, expect the other Parties to endorse all its actions. Both groups tried honestly and loyally to achieve this complete co-operation without equally sharing in the responsibility of government. It was unnatural. The organism was all the time trying to right itself out of its dislocation, though the struggle was not always apparent to the ordinary observer, and became more manifest in the light of later events.

As the months went by this defect in the administration of a country

at war caused repeated and more frequent irritations which developed malignantly within the artificial system. The representatives of the people were at last forced, most of them reluctantly, to accept the idea that a major operation would be necessary. Although Mr. Chamberlain, with the help of rigid discipline enforced by the Whip's office, maintained his hold on the House of Commons, dissatisfaction grew more widespread and intense and, served by disastrous events in the course of the war itself, brought about his resignation before the close of the first nine months of war and the creation of an All-Party Administration under Mr. Winston Churchill. A new spirit swept through the country—one of fierce determination to win the war at whatever cost. Parliament truly reflected this dynamic purpose. Thirteen days after the change in the Premiership both the House of Commons and the House of Lords readily accepted one of the most sweeping and revolutionary measures in constitutional history, thereby staking the treasured liberties of the British people in the cause of the still more precious freedom of the peoples of the world.

In those nine eventful months the public also saw the rise or decline of certain statesmen and the advent of fresh men in the field of national Administration. Mr. Chamberlain, as War Prime Minister, seemed to grow in strength during the first six months, especially when called to defend his policy, then passed through a period of uncertainty leading to an abrupt end in the ninth month, as mentioned above. But above all towered the commanding personality of Mr. Winston Churchill, whose influence over the House of Commons and in the country became so increasingly strong that in the political crisis that came to a head on May 8th in the sensational decline in the Government's majority on a "no confidence" challenge at the close of the debate on the Norway debacle, it was to him almost exclusively that Parliament and the nation turned for leadership.

The war came as no surprise. Even those who thought it could be averted foresaw its possibility. For some months there had been a growing uneasiness in Parliament, particularly since the middle of March in 1939 when the Germans took possession of Prague, and the restlessness of some of the Government supporters, who came near to open revolt, in addition to the swelling volume of criticism from the Opposition Parties, made manifest the spreading fear that the policy of appeasement might not mean the preservation of peace. When, therefore, at the beginning of August, it became known that the Government intended to adjourn the House until October 3rd, there was an ominous reaction

against adjournment whilst the international crisis persisted. Resolve to be ready for war inspired the session. During the summer the Government had outlined its plans for the control of coal consumption in time of war, with rationing schemes for coal, gas, and electricity ; had introduced a Bill for the compulsory insurance of ships, cargoes, and commodities against " King's Enemy Risks " ; had announced its plans for the maintenance of petrol and oil supplies, for the provision of steel shelters (one million, to accommodate six million people, had already been delivered by the beginning of August), and for the evacuation of children from vulnerable areas. Complete mobilization of the Fleet had been announced on the last day of August, and at the same time the Army Reserve and Supplementary Reserve and also a portion of the Air Force Volunteer Reserve had been summoned and the evacuation of children had actually begun on September 1st.

The recess was short. Parliament was recalled on August 24th, when, on the Suspension of Standing Orders and most significant in interpreting the feeling and apprehensions of the House of Commons, the new Emergency Powers (Defence) Bill was passed swiftly into law by 457 votes to only 4 against. This was followed by a measure for military conscription, the National Service (Armed Forces) Bill, on the very eve of the declaration of war, which was opposed only by a small group of pacifists. In addition to measures already mentioned, seventeen others dealing with matters and situations arising in war-time became Acts of Parliament on September 1st, 1939.

This prelude of precautionary measures and preliminaries to war steeled both Houses of Parliament against the worst that might happen. Even the announcement of the Soviet Russian non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany whilst Moscow was still conducting negotiations with Britain and France, though it caused a gasp of astonishment, caused no deflection from purpose and served only to stiffen the common resolve of all Parties to deal at last with the Nazi menace effectively and, if necessary, by means of war. When the two Houses met on September 1st they were anxious only to be assured that the Government had shown no weakness in reacting to Germany's latest breach of the peace. The exposure by Mr. Chamberlain in the Commons and by Lord Halifax in the House of Lords of Nazi trickery in the diplomatic exchanges with the Polish Government and the stern words addressed to Berlin gave Members a feeling of relief in having uncertainty removed and destroyed any element of surprise in the actual declaration of war when it was made two

days later. Indeed, many members were only surprised that there were a few hours of delay (due, as one learned later, to the hesitations of the French Government).

Mr. Chamberlain's immediate task was the reconstruction of his Administration. Rightly interpreting the wishes of the country, the Prime Minister invited Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. Anthony Eden to join the reformed Ministry, the former regaining the office he held in 1914. He also included Lord Hankey, who had been Secretary to the Cabinet during the War of 1914-18. The new War Cabinet was composed of the following Ministers :

Prime Minister
MR. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN
Chancellor of the Exchequer
SIR JOHN SIMON
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
LORD HALIFAX
Minister for Co-ordination of Defence
LORD CHATFIELD
First Lord of the Admiralty
MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL
Secretary of State for War
MR. L. HORE-BELISHA
Secretary of State for the Air
SIR H. KINGSLEY WOOD
Lord Privy Seal
SIR SAMUEL HOARE
Minister Without Portfolio
LORD HANKEY

Mr. Anthony Eden (at first Secretary for Dominions Affairs and later, Secretary for War), though not a member of the War Cabinet, was invited to attend all its meetings so as to emphasize the imperial partnership with the Dominions within the inner councils. This new War Cabinet of nine differed from that set up in 1916, not only in being bigger, but also because the majority of its members retained departmental portfolios and were therefore not free to give their attention exclusively to general matters of war policy. Sir Thomas Inskip was appointed Lord Chancellor in place of Lord Maugham, who retired. Lord Stanhope was moved from the Admiralty to be Lord President of the Council, and Sir John Anderson succeeded Sir Samuel Hoare at the Home Office.

Mr. Chamberlain had approached the Leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party and of the Opposition Liberals with a view to securing their co-operation in a Coalition Ministry, but the invitations were declined on the grounds that, whilst willing to give general support to the Government's war policy, they felt that the retention of their independence of action might prove useful in giving expression to public opinion in its criticism of the conduct of the war without causing internal Ministerial dissension. Beneath the surface, however, other reasons were operating. In order to participate in a Coalition Ministry the Labour Leaders in Parliament would have to consult the Executive Committee of the Labour Party, and it was well known that Labour throughout the country was resolute in its opposition to participation in a Government under the Premiership of Mr. Chamberlain. The Opposition Liberals were also averse to serving under a Prime Minister whose pre-war policy of appeasement had collapsed and had been so criticized by them. Mr. Chamberlain was in a dilemma. He would, it was thought, willingly have stood aside for some other Premier if thereby he could have been instrumental in bringing about a truly National Coalition. But the Conservatives, who held such a huge majority in the House of Commons, were just as determined not to let Mr. Chamberlain go as were the Leaders of the two Oppositions not to serve under him. An All-Party Coalition Ministry had, therefore, to be ruled out on account of its impracticability. The Leaders of both Opposition Parties made it clear, however, that they were ready to adopt a sympathetic attitude towards the Government and to render every possible aid from outside the Ministry as long as it prosecuted the war with energy.

The new War Parliament differed in several respects from the normal peace-time Parliament, principally in ministerial structure and its association with the French Parliament, its temper, and its manner of conduct of business. The posts for the Co-ordination of Defence (Lord Chatfield), the Ministry of Supply (Mr. L. Burgin), and the Ministry of Information (Lord Perth) were admittedly set up before the actual outbreak of war, but they were created because of the increasing imminence of war. The Ministry of Shipping (Sir John Gilmour) and the Ministry of Economic Warfare (Mr. R. H. Cross) were established within a week or so of the declaration of war. Great importance, from the point of view of the closeness of Anglo-French co-operation, must be attached to the immediate creation of the Allied Supreme War Council (which held its first meeting in France only eight days after war began, whereas in the last war the

two Allied Governments did not arrive at a similar decision for three and a quarter years) and, to a less extent, to the formation of a Joint Committee of the French Chamber and the House of Commons to act as a liaison instrument between the two Parliaments and between the peoples of France and Britain. The meetings of the Supreme War Council, sometimes in London and sometimes in Paris, and other administrative contacts resulted in ever closer union between the two countries. This found practical expression, particularly in the important agreement concluded in December 1939, the scope of which went far beyond anything ever previously contracted by Britain and France. By this pact, unity was established in economic and monetary affairs as complete as that already existing in military command ; virtually, the resources of the two Empires were pooled for the common good. In fact, the agreement was so comprehensive in its scope and so fundamental in its character that the more optimistic spirits in Parliament and among the public saw in it the beginning of Federal Union. At another meeting of the Supreme Council, held in London on March 28th, 1940, the British and French Governments made a solemn declaration (sadly destroyed by subsequent events) neither to negotiate nor to conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement, and, further, to maintain, after the conclusion of peace, "a community of action in all spheres for so long as may be necessary to safeguard their security and to effect the reconstruction, with the assistance of other nations, of an international order which will ensure the liberty of peoples, respect for law, and the maintenance of peace in Europe."

The prevailing mood in Parliament from the eve of the outbreak of war onwards was in striking contrast to that of the pre-war years. Although in the first stages of the war the Labour Party and the Opposition Liberals remained outside the Government, on neither side was there any conscious attempt to make Party capital out of any particular situation. Party prejudices and considerations were in the main laid aside in the general desire to promote the successful prosecution of the war. Occasionally, as in the debate on the Old Age Pensions Bill, with its provision for a means test, there was a tendency to revert to Party alignment and strife ; but such reversions were temporary and usually occurred in periods of comparative inactivity on the war fronts. Far greater in number were the striking manifestations of the unity of the House of Commons, as when, on February 27th, 1940—to cite but one instance—there was not a murmur of criticism of the Navy Estimates from the

Opposition benches, although Mr. Churchill (then First Lord of the Admiralty) would not disclose the amount of expenditure involved.

This does not mean that the House became a compact body of "yes-men" and that criticism has been entirely absent. The truth is that all criticism tended to become more selective and to be directed almost solely against Ministers who failed at Question Time to give satisfactory replies concerning their specific tasks. Its motive was to keep Ministers keyed up to top pitch, to prevent slacking, and it should, therefore, be regarded as a contribution to the general Parliamentary war effort. It was exercised frequently by a group of young and able Ministerial back benchers, some of whom have since become members of the Churchill Administration. They, with others, doubtless sensed and reacted to the weakening of the Whips' power through the extension of Parliament for an indefinite period.

In this connexion an interesting development, which may have an important bearing upon future Parliaments, should be noted. First, the benevolent support of and, later, the active participation in the Government by the Opposition Parties, coupled with the postponement of the general election into the indefinite future, started the process of restoring the independence of individual Members. The agency of criticism has already moved from the Opposition Front Bench, which of recent years had secured almost a monopoly of it, but which now (since the change of Government in May) no longer exists in the generally accepted sense, to the general back benches, irrespective of Party. The Party Whips, deprived of their instrument of coercion in the form of hints or threats of reprisals at the general election, have been steadily losing their disciplinary powers, and it seemed doubtful if they could recover them. One of the important issues of the War Parliament from the Parliamentary point of view may, indeed, be the permanent weakening, if not the end, of the rule of "Whipocracy."

Another striking characteristic of Parliament during the first nine months of war was the remarkable speeding up of legislation, not only in comparison with peace-time, but also when compared with the war period of 1914-18. Perhaps the Germans are entitled to some of the credit for this unwonted acceleration. At all events, our legislators seem to have realized that in times of a *Blitzkrieg* Bills must also be passed into law at lightning speed. Mention has already been made of the passing, by way of precaution, of certain measures and the creation of certain Government Departments before the war broke out, of the swift passage

through Parliament of the Emergency Powers (Defence) Bill a few days before war, of Conscription (which was not introduced in the last war until twenty months had elapsed), and of other steps which were taken immediately instead of waiting on dire events. Things were done in the first fortnight of the present war which were accomplished in the last war only after two or three years of discussion. Before the first month of war had passed forty-seven Acts of Parliament had found their way to the Statute Book. Other important measures were passed in rapid succession before the close of the year 1939. This abnormal speed was further accelerated in the early days of the Churchill Ministry.

Parliament's main preoccupation in war-time is naturally the efficient conduct of the war itself; other questions, in so far as they are not directly or indirectly contributive to the war effort, must necessarily be of secondary importance or even shelved awhile. Interest in Parliament during these past months has consequently centred around statements of British aims, of war policy, and reviews of the situation by the Prime Minister and other leading Ministers of State. At the outset Mr. Chamberlain laid it down very clearly that Britain was fighting the Nazi tyranny and not the German people, for, in his broadcast to the German people on September 3rd, 1939, he said: "In this war we are not fighting against you, the German people, for whom we have no bitter feeling, but against a tyrannous and forsworn régime, which has betrayed not only its own people but the whole of Western civilization and all that you and we hold dear." In Parliament differences of opinion on this point repeatedly showed themselves, and it was doubtful whether all the members of the Government were of Mr. Chamberlain's mind. It was noteworthy, too, that there were fewer official asseverations of this view as time went on and the German people made no attempt to disassociate themselves from the ruthless ambition for world domination of their Nazi rulers.

Many of Mr. Chamberlain's war statements were masterly and unmistakably to the point. A crowded House on October 3rd enthusiastically cheered his comments on the reports of imminent peace proposals from Germany. Then, and on October 12th in reply to Herr Hitler's Reichstag speech, and on several subsequent occasions, he made it clear that the Allies were fighting for a security which could not be called in question every six months. On November 2nd, 1939, he was able to tell the House of Commons of the solidarity of all parts of the Empire, who had "eagerly offered help," which was gladly accepted. His speeches evoked on the whole little criticism at home, but served rather to con-

solidate his position ; it was not until the stories of Finland and Norway had to be told that the Prime Minister's stock in Parliament began to fall at sensational speed.

Mr. Churchill's reviews in Parliament during the Chamberlain régime were usually of more limited scope and on a subject which afforded him opportunities of rising to heights which he rarely missed. His remarkable oration in the very earliest stage of the war, when he revealed that one-tenth of Germany's submarines were destroyed in the first two weeks of the war and probably one-third by that date (September 26th), established more firmly than ever Parliament's confidence in the Navy. Even when the First Lord had disaster to report, his frankness and directness, as on November 12th in dealing with the loss of the *Royal Oak*, only resulted in strengthening his hold on the Commons. There was a sharp division of opinion about his plain hint to the smaller neutrals in January that the war would be shortened if they did their duty under the League Covenant and stood together against aggression, but the angry resentment it aroused in those countries was interpreted as the reaction of uneasy minds at hearing the blunt truth, and most people in this country soon came round to the view that Mr. Churchill's " indiscretion " was only an expression of what everybody was thinking. Three months later, after two hundred neutral ships had been destroyed and nearly a thousand neutral seamen had been slaughtered by the Nazis whilst the British Navy was successfully protecting those that accepted its convoy system, Mr. Churchill was able to repeat his warning without abuse, for by then the neutrals had learned the truth of his statement by bitter experience.

Of other Ministers during this earlier period, Lord Halifax, the Foreign Secretary, was the most outstanding personality. His speeches were invariably firm and elevated in tone and rarely failed to strike a response from something deep in the minds of the people. There is, for example, lasting truth in the comparison he made on January 20th, 1940, between the initial advantages (through the enslavement of the people) enjoyed by dictators in making war and the ultimate inherent strength of free democracies :

" When trouble comes, the fact that the people know and have approved invests the decision reached with the overwhelming force of free judgment and their united will. It is just that unity of moral purpose which Herr Hitler rates so low, and which will, if I mistake not, be the principal cause of his defeat."



RT HON VISCOUNT HALIFAX, KG PC

On several occasions he was called upon to restate Britain's war purposes, which, briefly expressing his interpretation, were first that people who have been robbed of their independence should recover it, and secondly, that Europe should be delivered from the fear of German aggression. But towards the end of the period under review doubts arose as to whether his policy of patience towards Spain and Japan, despite the very obvious dangers of adding to the number of our enemies, was not likely to prove as ineffective as it had done in the case of Italy.

Parliament attached considerable importance to the economic weapon in the struggle with Germany and in the first few months showed dissatisfaction with the known achievements, but members were greatly relieved to hear the very interesting—if over-optimistic—report of the Minister of Economic Warfare (Mr. Ronald Cross) on January 17th, 1940, who stated that British control had stopped the bulk of German exports and that in countries not separated from Germany by sea the British Government had been instrumental in buying up "vital goods" to prevent them finding their way to Germany. This was amplified by Mr. Chamberlain in his review of the war on April 2nd in his description of the ring of trade pacts with neutral countries which the Government was building up around Germany, and by the announcement by Sir John Simon in the House of Commons on April 4th that the Government had formed a great British trading corporation, backed by the Treasury, to develop trade with the Balkans, with the twofold aim of intensifying the economic war against Germany and of providing a new and better basis for Anglo-Balkan trade when peace should be restored. In a secret session the House of Commons was also informed of the progress of the economic warfare in more detail than could be disclosed to the public at the time.

Parliament was also cheered in May to learn that whilst the efforts to strangle Germany's trade were proving successful, our own exports had risen. Exports for the two months of March and April 1940 averaged, for instance, £44,900,000 a month, as against £38,400,000 in 1939. This favourable movement was attributed by several trade experts in Parliament to the operations of the Export Council, which began to function properly in February. But the discussions in the Commons in the early part of 1940 on the question of this country's production and the relation between wages and prices disclosed some friction between the back and front benches, indicative of more serious disagreement beneath the surface,

particularly when the Government rather lightly dismissed the Labour demand for a more forceful economic control. Against this discordant development, however, must be set the satisfaction with which Parliament greeted the announcement of the Government's decision, after five months of war, to put all shipbuilding, both naval and merchant vessels, under the control of the Admiralty. For war-time at least shipbuilding thus became nationalized. The purpose of this decision, it was explained, was to eliminate competition in the building of naval and merchant vessels and to increase the mercantile fleet so as to relieve this country of the necessity for relying upon so much neutral shipping on charter. Sir James Lithgow was appointed head of the new enterprise, which was, in the opinion of Parliament, also calculated to assure the country an adequate supply of imported foodstuffs. This new departure also tended to offset the undisguised lack of confidence of the House of Commons in the original appointment of the late Sir John Gilmour to be head of the Shipping Ministry, with Sir Arthur Salter, who had unrivalled experience of shipping control in the last war, only in the position of Parliamentary Secretary.

Apart from direct war legislation, such as the numerous measures for Air Raid Precaution, all other legislation which came before Parliament and decisions on policy were more or less affected by considerations of the successful conduct of the war. The Report of the West India Royal Commission, disclosing the shocking conditions of malnutrition and ill-health prevalent in the West Indies, would, in ordinary times, probably have stirred up an embittered Parliamentary controversy involving the consideration of manifold interests ; as it was, after a little plain speaking, the Government promptly agreed to give more regular assistance than hitherto and to take other measures for protecting and promoting the interests of the colonial inhabitants. Palestine, once more, threatened to become a bone of contention with agreement long deferred, and actually led at the beginning of March to the first vote of censure moved in the House of Commons since war began. The debate was of a high order, with Mr. Noel Baker, for the Labour Party, and Sir Archibald Sinclair, for the Liberals, delivering two of the best speeches heard during the session, whilst Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, the Colonial Secretary, scored one of the biggest successes of his Ministerial career with his clear, complete, firm, and persuasive explanation of the Government's policy. The House realized that whatever might be said for or against this policy in times of peace, it was only common wisdom during the war to accept

as a prime condition the necessity for doing nothing to offend the Moslem world.

In Home affairs the same influence was at work. The Commons debate on agriculture on February 1st, 1940, was, for instance, in danger of becoming a formal discussion of departmental matters when Mr. Lloyd George, in an inspiring speech, converted it into an earnest deliberation on the means of winning the war. In this field the country had several grievances to be voiced in Parliament, one of the most serious being the acute lack of fodder after farmers had earlier been urged to increase their heads of livestock during the war. The Minister for Agriculture (Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith) divulged to Members the Government's plans for bringing much more land under the plough and for assisting farmers, but the House was left with the uneasy reflection that much time would elapse before anything like an adequate acreage would be brought under cultivation. The farming interests in Parliament were able to put up a strong case for their special grievances, and reduced the Government's majority to 33 in a division when the agricultural debate was resumed on the Agriculture (Miscellaneous War Provisions) Bill. For some time before the war the Labour Party had been demanding in vain a minimum weekly wage of £2 for agricultural workers; after a few months of war, with the Government ever dependent upon the continued goodwill of the Labour Party, the Agricultural Wages Act was passed, under which the Central Wages Board fixed 42s. as the national minimum wage, whilst soon after the Churchill Ministry was formed in May it was announced that the minimum would be raised to 48s.

Whilst not resisting too stoutly the Labour pressure for higher wages, the Government endeavoured to ensure the maintenance of a steady level of prices. This, as Mr. W. S. Morrison, Minister of Food, pointed out in a debate on April 2nd, 1940, was considered "an important adjunct to our war effort." Later in the discussion and in reply to Labour criticism and statements on the rise of prices, it was pointed out that the Government was spending £26 million a year to keep bread prices down, and, for a similar purpose, £16 million in respect of meat and between £4 million and £5 million in respect of bacon. War considerations also influenced both the Government and the Opposition in dealing with the question of Old Age Pensions. Labour threatened to put up a stiff fight for much higher pensions, especially in view of the fact that prices were, in fact, rising; the Government's scheme, however, already went somewhat farther to meet Labour demands than it would have done in peace-time,

and at a hint that if the Opposition persisted in taking up time for the fight the scheme would be deferred for a considerable period, arrangements were at once made (at the beginning of March) to pass the Pensions Bill without delay. Old Age Pensions were later raised by the new Government in May to 19s. 6d. for a person living alone, and to 32s. for pensioned couples.

Although Labour in Parliament seemed at times unable to make up its mind when to press home the advantages of its position as a benevolent Opposition, the nature of its relation to the Government afforded numerous opportunities of influencing legislation in the direction it desired. In the first fortnight of the war the Parliamentary Labour Leaders and the Trades Union Congress made it clear that they expected to be more than consultants. Soon afterwards they were invited to serve on equal terms with business men on the Advisory Committees set up under the Ministry of Supply to help in war-time production. The attack in Parliament in the early part of February on the Government's agreement with the railway companies was utilized as an opportunity to make out a strong case for the co-ordination of all forms of inland transport and probably brought that part of Labour policy nearer to realization. On April 5th the Opposition brought the Government's majority down to 21 on the question of how to use the credit balance of £57,555,222 in the unemployment insurance fund, the Labour speakers demanding all-round benefits, whereas the Unemployment Insurance (Increase of Benefit in Respect of Dependent Children) Order, 1940, whilst increasing benefit for the first two children from 3s. to 4s. a week, allotted £37 million to debt repayment and a substantial amount to reserve. The Workmen's Compensation (Supplementary Allowance) Bill, submitted at the end of April and providing for an extra £2 million a year for compensation benefits, also showed traces of Labour influence, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Greenwood said the amount was a miserable one and condemned the Bill because of its "failure to recognize the necessity for an immediate all-round increase in the rates of compensation."

It was not, however, the Labour factor that wrought the collapse of the Chamberlain Government, for this alone would probably never have found strong enough support in Parliament to effect such an upheaval. The most serious threats to the Government were made only when its disaffected followers associated their censure with that of the two Oppositions. In the earlier stages there was no general offensive against the Ministerial stronghold, as such, but only assaults on defaulting depart-

mental outposts. The insufficient use of the nation's man-power was one question which rallied a united force against the Government. At the beginning of the war Mr. Ernest Brown, Minister of Labour, promised that the voluntary industrial machine would be used to the utmost ; yet at the end of 1939 there were still some 1,300,000 unemployed persons. During the ensuing weeks, and irrespective of Party allegiances, dissatisfaction grew and came to a head on April 16th, when the House of Commons went into committee on a vote of £25,358,000 for the Ministry of Labour and National Service. Lord Winterton (Conservative) made an unfavourable comparison with the use of man- and woman-power by other belligerents ; Mr. D. O. Evans (Liberal) foresaw a time when much more drastic steps would have to be taken in the organization of the labour force ; and Mr. G. Hall (Labour) bluntly declared that the Government had not planned the nation's requirements in such a way as to guarantee a successful prosecution of the war. The Minister's explanation about the maintenance of a balance of man-power between the armed forces and industry and between various industries themselves failed to dispel the widespread dissatisfaction. Four or five months earlier the Government had been severely taxed by some of its own supporters for the inefficiency, the alleged lack of initiative and of energy of certain of its members, and these critics claimed that nothing since done by these particular Ministries warranted a modification of their strictures. The Ministers most subjected to these repeated attacks were those responsible for Food, Shipping, Labour, Transport, Mines, and Information.

The case of the Ministry of Information and the Censorship became notorious. Within nine months there were four different Ministers or Ministers-Elect for this important office : first, Lord Perth, then Lord Macmillan with Lord Camrose to assist him, followed by Sir John Reith and, as a result of the reconstruction of the Government in May, Mr. Duff Cooper ; but it was only in latter times that Parliament was able to ease its mind about this Department. The curious staffing of the Ministry deprived it at the outset of the possibility of gaining the confidence of Parliament—throughout the period under review men with past experience in the presentation of news and views were rare. The muddles over Censorship committed jointly by its officials and by those of the News Departments of the Service Ministries roused the Commons to vehement protests. Before the war had run the course of a month Lady Astor echoed the opinion of the majority in the House when she said that " If the Department is satisfied, then they are the only people in the

world who are. The war news spread in neutral countries is an absolute disgrace."

Another Conservative Member, Mr. R. Boothby, said that the Censorship was conducted by means of a tug-of-war between Sir Walter Monckton (who was almost alone among higher officials in winning the gratitude of the Press) and the Service Departments, and he failed to discover what constructive function the Ministry fulfilled. Subsequently, after a few meanderings towards a system to suppress opinion, Mr. Duff Cooper and his subordinate, Mr. Harold Nicolson, worked out a relatively happy relationship with the Press.

The fall of Mr. Hore-Belisha, the former Secretary for War, must be regarded as something quite apart from the general trend of criticism in Parliament and the developments therefrom. His resignation at the beginning of January 1940 was a complete surprise and proved to be a Parliamentary mystery ; but equally mysterious was the sudden dropping of interest in the matter after it had threatened to become, as it were, a *cause célèbre*. Mr. Hore-Belisha's tenure of the War Office was generally judged by all Parties to be satisfactory and in some respects outstandingly successful, whilst he himself gained the reputation of being one of the most vigorous and resourceful of members of the War Cabinet. Members found the matter still more incomprehensible on learning that whilst Mr. Hore-Belisha was virtually asked to quit the War Office for no reasons of difference of opinion with his colleagues in the Cabinet, he was offered the Presidency of the Board of Trade, which he refused. The wave of indignation among certain sections of the House at what was popularly taken to be the dismissal of a capable War Minister rapidly subsided. The statements of both the Prime Minister and Mr. Hore-Belisha himself disposed of rumours about a difference on policy, but, apart from that, all the enlightenment the House of Commons was permitted to enjoy was Mr. Chamberlain's reference to " difficulties arising out of the very great qualities of Mr. Hore-Belisha " which made a change at the War Office necessary. Mr. Hore-Belisha made no attempt to press the issue and spoke instead of the great importance of unifying the whole effort of the nation. Mr. Oliver Stanley was appointed as successor to Mr. Hore-Belisha, whilst Sir Andrew Duncan, an industrialist of wide experience and reputation, was appointed to the Presidency of the Board of Trade, vacated by Mr. Stanley. At the same time it was announced that Sir John Reith was the new Minister of Information in place of Lord Macmillan, who had also resigned.

In the matter of financing the war, Parliament, as, indeed, the whole country, had no illusions. Everyone accepted with stoicism the grim fact that a stupendous price would have to be paid. The first War Budget was introduced in the House of Commons by Sir John Simon on September 27th, 1939, and has been dealt with elsewhere in this volume.

Although the fall of Mr. Chamberlain came with the suddenness of an avalanche, there had been warning rumblings some weeks ahead. The shortcomings of several Ministers or Secretaries had provoked sharper attacks than hitherto from the Opposition and from the malcontents on the Ministerial side, and, more significant for the Government itself, had increased the number of minor revolts on the National Government back benches. The shafts were then, however, aimed not so much at the Prime Minister as at certain of his colleagues. The reaction to Mr. Chamberlain's account, on March 19th, of the aid given to Finland was curious and must also be regarded as a contributory omen. His speech was extremely able. The House was plainly moved by his story of the tragedy of Finland and heartened by his note of grim determination. His explanation that Field-Marshal Mannerheim had said in January that he wanted no reinforcements then, but would like to have 30,000 trained soldiers in May, that by the beginning of March the Allies actually had a well-equipped force of 100,000 men available for Finland, but that Norway and Sweden had refused to allow the passage of troops through their territory, and that the expected appeal by Finland was never made, proved very effective. At the time members showed that they were convinced of the Government's good intentions, which could not be realized because of circumstances outside its control. Yet, reflecting on that debate, they felt uneasy as they recalled the penetration of Sir Archibald Sinclair's criticism, the formidable case made out by Mr. Hore-Belisha, and, most of all, the fearless attacks of two of the younger Conservatives, Mr. Richard Law and Mr. Harold Macmillan, the latter delivering one of the most damaging exposures of recent times.

Mr. Chamberlain's position was weakened ; the suspicion remained with the House of Commons that everything possible had not been done to avert disaster in Finland. It was about this time, too, that speculation on the desirability of a reconstructed Ministry again became prevalent. But when the Government was reconstituted, it caused only dissatisfaction. Truly, the advancement of Mr. Winston Churchill to the Chairmanship of the new Committee of Service Ministers, in the place of Lord Chatfield (who retired) as Minister for the Co-ordination of Defence,

was generally approved, and the appointment of Lord Woolton, as Minister of Food, was considered by the House to be an experiment well worth trying, although it was felt that Mr. W. S. Morrison's relegation to the Postmaster-Generalship was hardly deserved. But Members could not understand what purpose could be served by Sir Kingsley Wood and Sir Samuel Hoare exchanging their respective places at the Ministry for Air and as Lord Privy Seal, or why Lord De La Warr should move from the Board of Education, where he had done excellently, to be First Commissioner of Works, and why Mr. H. Ramsbottom should be shifted from the latter office to be President of the Board of Education. The failure to recognize Sir Arthur Salter's incomparable qualifications to be promoted from Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for Shipping also caused general surprise, notwithstanding the marked ability of Mr. R. S. Hudson, who was appointed to succeed the late Sir John Gilmour. The reshuffling of other posts likewise aroused no enthusiasm and only critical interest in Parliament. There was, on the other hand, considerable disappointment that so little fresh blood had been infused into a Ministry which, in some respects, was tired, uninspired, and uninspiring.

Mr. Chamberlain, however, adroitly recovered lost ground when, addressing the Central Council of Conservatives and Unionists on April 4th, he affirmed that after seven months of war he was ten times as confident of victory as he had been at the outset. He declared that Herr Hitler, having failed for whatever reason to take advantage of his initial superiority to make an attempt to overwhelm the Allies, had, for a certainty, "missed the bus." He won still greater success, when, on April 9th, a crowded House of Commons burst into angry cheering at his denunciation of Germany's "further rash and cruel act of aggression" in invading Denmark and Norway and his firm repetition of the Allied promise of full aid to Norway met with prolonged applause. But in the light of events of the ensuing two to three weeks those stirring statements proved to be unfortunate for the Prime Minister and recoiled upon him, and even the brilliant exploits of the British Navy in Norwegian waters failed to shield him from the assault of public opinion, and especially of those critics who had always doubted whether a sincere "appeaser" was likely to be a vigorous leader in war.

It was an anxious House on May 2nd that awaited the Prime Minister's statement on the campaign in Norway; it was a most disturbed House that suspended final judgment after hearing that statement. Mr. Chamberlain carried out the grimmest duty that had been his lot since

war began, explaining that the withdrawal of Allied troops from south of Trondheim was necessary because the supremacy of the German Air Force over the ports had made it impossible to land artillery and tanks ; the withdrawal, he added, had been carried out under the very noses of German aeroplanes without the loss of a single man. It was only an interim statement he could make, for certain operations were then in progress and nothing should be done that might jeopardize the lives of those engaged in them. He therefore asked the House to defer comment and question until the debate in the coming week. In response to that request the Opposition Leaders refrained from putting supplementary questions. But an interim judgment was formed by Members and even by the public during the week-end, whilst the Sunday journals either called for a new Government or hinted that the country would not be averse to such a change.

The Prime Minister, although greeted with prolonged cheers from the Ministerial benches, faced a restive assembly when he rose to make his promised continued statement on the following Tuesday. Interruptions and mutterings punctuated his speech, and the Speaker had to appeal for order. Mr. Chamberlain gave a full account of the failure to take Trondheim and stoutly defended the Government's decisions, though he made no attempt to extenuate the gravity of the defeat. He also explained the difficulties that arose through the Norwegian Government's strict devotion to neutrality right up to the moment of the German invasion. The withdrawal from central Norway could not be compared with Gallipoli ; with not much more than one division involved, the losses in men and material had not been heavy. On the question of the dispersal of the Finnish expeditionary force, he explained that the main body had been sent to France while the advance troops were kept in Britain. If the advance troops could have established themselves in Norway, there would have been no delay in sending the main body from France. But the rate of the dispatch of troops was governed by the speed at which they could be landed at the very few inadequate ports of entry. The Allied withdrawal was due to the inability to secure aerodromes and to the rapid reinforcements received by the Germans.

On many of the main issues the Prime Minister's defence of the Government's policy and actions seemed to satisfy the House, but it was noted that he did not answer all the questions which the public were rightly asking, and thereby he was vulnerable to attack. Mr. Attlee, speaking for the Opposition, considered that older and more seasoned

troops should have been sent to Norway, and he asked some pointed questions about the British Intelligence Service in Norway and Denmark. Sir Archibald Sinclair, for the Liberals, demanded more foresight and energy and a stronger and more ruthless will to victory in the country's leadership. After urging the neutrals to seek our aid, we had shown them we were not ready to aid them. He severely criticized the equipment of the troops, and alleged there had been muddle, waste, and confusion.

Dramatic moments followed. Admiral Sir Roger Keyes, wearing his uniform for the first time in the House because, as he said, he came "to speak for some officers and men of the fighting, sea-going Navy who are very unhappy," roused cheers from all sides when he declared, in challenging tones, that Trondheim could have been captured if a few ships had entered the fjord immediately the Army was ready to co-operate, and revealed that when he realized how badly things were going he had importuned the Admiralty and the War Cabinet to let him take the responsibility of organizing and leading the attack. Trondheim was, he said, "a shocking story of ineptitude." Another Conservative, Mr. L. S. Amery, one-time First Lord of the Admiralty, Colonial Secretary, and Secretary for Dominions Affairs, said there was not one sentence in the Prime Minister's speech which suggested that the Government either foresaw what the Germans meant to do, or came to a clear decision when they knew what Germany had done, or acted wisely and consistently throughout the whole of the lamentable affair. He ended his attack on the Government by quoting from Cromwell's dismissal of the Long Parliament: "Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!" The Conservative Earl Winterton said that if the situation in Norway turned out to be as grave as many feared, military and civilian officers from the Prime Minister and Chief of Staff downwards should be brought before a High Court for examination, and Mr. A. Greenwood, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, caustically observed that wars were not won by masterly evacuations.

The cumulative effect of these attacks, the most vigorous of which were from the Government benches, was so strong that the House seemed to miss the full significance of the observation made by Mr. Oliver Stanley, the War Secretary, that Norway was not the only place where danger threatened, and that at any moment the greatest storm might burst in the West which would be absolutely decisive for this country. At the close of the day Members of all Parties were one in the opinion that there would have to be changes in the personnel of the Ministry, but few thought

that the Opposition would press matters to a division, with its implications of no confidence in the Government's general conduct of the war. But surprises were in store for the morrow.

The course of criticism was widening from the conduct of the Norway campaign to an examination of the general record and character of Mr. Chamberlain's Ministry. This development became pronounced during the debate, which was resumed the next day by Mr. Herbert Morrison, who, speaking for the Labour Opposition, announced his Party's decision to divide the House. It was then that the Prime Minister made a tactical mistake which must have decided some of the waverers against him. Mr. Chamberlain, accepting responsibility for the actions of the Government and scorning the very suggestion of evading criticism, observed that he had friends in the House to whom he would say that no Government could prosecute the war efficiently without public and Parliamentary support; and then, amidst the confusion of cheers, counter-cheers, and interruptions, he hotly retorted: "I accept the challenge, and I welcome it. Now at least we shall see who is with us and who is against us. I call upon my friends to support us in the lobbies tonight."

This appeal to his friends gave the cue to Mr. Lloyd George, who said it was not a question of who were the Prime Minister's friends, for the House was faced with a much bigger question than that. He reminded the House that the Prime Minister had appealed for sacrifice, and declared that the country was prepared for every sacrifice as long as it had leadership. Then came this challenging utterance: "I say solemnly that the Prime Minister must give an example of sacrifice, because there is nothing which would contribute more to victory than that he should sacrifice the seals of office."

By this time, and in view of the failure of Sir Samuel Hoare to strengthen the Government's case in his explanation of air activities in the Norwegian campaign, it was obvious that the position of the Chamberlain Administration was seriously endangered. In a brilliant speech of defence, notable for its complete candour, Mr. Churchill declared that the cause of the failure in south Norway was this country's neglect during the past five years to maintain or retain air parity with Germany, and that fact condemned the country to a great deal of difficulties, sufferings, and dangers for some time to come. He replied effectively to detailed criticisms of naval operations and took responsibility with the Prime Minister for accepting the advice of the Chiefs of Staffs, whose views he

thought were right. He strongly condemned the attempt at a vote of censure and asked Members to bury their pre-war hatreds, warning them that "at no time in the last war were we in greater peril than we are now." The First Lord's powerful speech may have rescued for the Government's support a number of undecided minds, but it could not stem the strong movement of revulsion against the existing Administration. Meanwhile, the struggle was being carried on in the House of Lords, where the attack on the Government was conducted principally by Lord Strabolgi and Lord Snell. In reply to criticisms, Lord Hankey made a detailed exposition of the course of events; and Lord Halifax, stressing the full responsibility of the whole Cabinet, whose members were in complete accord with the Prime Minister, declared that if all the facts, as they appeared at the time, were fairly weighed, the Allied action would not be deserving of much of the hard judgment which had been extended to it.

Normally, the National Government could rely upon a majority of about 200 in a division in the House of Commons, but on this historic occasion its majority slumped to 81, the voting being 281 for the Government and 200 against. The significance of this relatively small majority was seized at once. It implied the defeat of the Chamberlain Ministry. Loud cries of "Resign" and "Go" arose from the Opposition and the ranks of the rebels, some of whom, in the emotion of the moment, broke into the refrain of "Rule, Britannia." As Mr. Chamberlain rose slowly and walked past the Speaker's chair and out of the Chamber, his loyal supporters countered the demonstration against him by ecstatically cheering their chief with upraised arms. It was the end of the National Government under the leadership of Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

The next day Parliament adjourned until May 21st, but on the understanding that it might be summoned at a day's notice in the interval. When it met again, on May 13th, with Mr. Winston Churchill as Prime Minister of an All-Party Government, the storm had already burst over western Europe—three days earlier German forces had invaded Holland, Belgium, and Luxemburg, and the Dutch and Belgian Governments had appealed to Britain and France for aid, which was at once promised. Mr. Chamberlain, who had tendered his resignation to the King on the evening of May 10th, made a broadcast appeal to the nation for complete unity under Mr. Churchill's leadership, especially in view of the new danger threatening this country through the latest German violation of the neutrality of two small nations. Already, the news that Mr. Churchill

had been entrusted by the King with the formation of a new Government had drawn all sections of opinion together (with the exception of an insignificant sprinkling of Fascists and Communists) with the great purpose of achieving the utmost co-operation; the rape of Belgium and the Netherlands, followed by Mr. Chamberlain's appeal, removed all possible obstacles. The Labour Party Executive promptly announced their decision to take their share of responsibility as a full partner in a new Government, under a new Prime Minister, which would command the confidence of the nation. On May 13th the House of Commons passed a vote of confidence in the new Ministry (then not yet fully constituted) by 381 to 0, the only opposition being composed by the two tellers (Mr. Maxton and Mr. Campbell Stephen) for the Noes; the House of Lords vote was absolutely unanimous.

Everything was now done with the utmost expedition. Mr. Churchill set an example by dispensing with traditional formalities in making his Ministerial appointments wherever their observance meant a loss of time. He appointed a War Cabinet of five members, approved by the King on May 11th, 1940, as follows:

Prime Minister and Minister of Defence
 Mr. WINSTON CHURCHILL
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
 Viscount HALIFAX
Lord President of the Council
 Mr. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN
Lord Privy Seal
 Mr. C. R. ATTLEE
Minister without Portfolio
 Mr. A. GREENWOOD

The Leader and Deputy-Leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party and of the Opposition in the House of Commons thus became members of the inner council. Only two of the five members of the War Cabinet had departmental duties, so that on the whole the new Cabinet was able to give full attention to problems of policy.

The most important of the remaining Ministerial appointments were as follows:

First Lord of the Admiralty
 Mr. A. V. ALEXANDER
Secretary for War
 Mr. ANTHONY EDEN

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Secretary for the Air

Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR

Chancellor of the Exchequer

Sir H. KINGSLEY WOOD

Home Secretary

Sir JOHN ANDERSON

Secretary for Dominions Affairs

Lord CALDECOTE (formerly Sir THOMAS INSKIP)

Colonial Secretary

Lord LLOYD

President of the Board of Trade

Sir ANDREW DUNCAN

Minister of Supply

Mr. H. MORRISON

Minister for Aircraft Production

Lord BEAVERBROOK

Minister of Labour and National Service

Mr. ERNEST BEVIN

Minister of Economic Warfare

Mr. HUGH DALTON

Minister for Shipping

Mr. R. CROSS

Minister for Transport

Sir JOHN REITH

Minister for Agriculture

Mr. R. HUDSON

Minister for Food

Lord WOOLTON

Minister of Health

Mr. M. MACDONALD

Minister of Information

Mr. DUFF COOPER

Minister of Pensions

Lord WOMERSLEY

President of the Board of Education

Mr. H. RAMSBOTTOM

Secretary for India and Burma

Mr. L. S. AMERY

Lord Chancellor

Lord SIMON

Attorney-General

Sir DONALD SOMERVELL

Solicitor-General

Sir WILLIAM JOWITT

Postmaster-General

Mr. W. S. MORRISON

Paymaster-General

LORD CRANBORNE

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

LORD HANKEY

Secretary for Scotland

MR. ERNEST BROWN

First Commissioner of Works

LORD TRYON

The Ministry for Aircraft Production was a new creation. Another new post was the Secretaryship for Petroleum, to which Mr. Geoffrey Lloyd was appointed. Of other minor appointments, the following were among those that secured most public notice; Mr. D. R. Grenfell, himself once a miner, as Secretary for Mines; Mr. Chuter Ede, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education; Mr. R. Boothby, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food; Mr. H. Macmillan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Supply; Mr. Tom Williams, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry for Agriculture; Mr. H. Nicolson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Information; Mr. Harcourt Johnstone, Secretary to the Department of Overseas Trade; Miss Ellen Wilkinson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Pensions; Mr. R. K. Law, Financial Secretary to the War Office. Sir Arthur Salter retained his post as Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry for Shipping.

Mr. Churchill's short speech on his first appearance as Prime Minister in the House of Commons, summoned to assemble on Whit-Monday to endorse the formation of the new Government, was electrifying. He had, he told the House, nothing to offer but "blood, toil, tears, and sweat," and the country's only choice was victory or annihilation. Members felt that the nation's will was reconsecrated to the single purpose of achieving victory. They realized, too, that delay in any business whatsoever would be a drag on the nation's vital effort. Bills which in normal times would be subjected to thorough debate had, therefore, to be put through at all possible speed.

The new Parliamentary session under Mr. Churchill's newly constituted Government opened on May 21st, when both Houses reassembled after the short Whitsun recess. On that day Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, former Colonial Secretary, but now Minister of Health, moved the second reading of the Colonial Development and Welfare Bill, establishing the duty of this country to contribute to the development in the widest sense of the

work of the colonial peoples. The moneys to be made available for this purpose would, he said, be multiplied more than fivefold. The discussion was short and the House agreed to the financial resolution. The following day the Treachery Bill, providing for the death penalty in serious cases of espionage and sabotage, was read for the third time in the Commons and sent to the House of Lords, and the National Service (Armed Forces) Bill, providing that persons shall not be exempted from liability under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act, 1939, by reason of their being members of the Local Defence Volunteers, likewise passed through all its stages.

But most important of all was the speedy passage into law of the Emergency Powers (Defence) Bill on May 22nd, 1940. This Bill to extend the powers taken under the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act, 1939, notwithstanding the revolutionary nature of its provisions, passed through all its stages in both Houses of Parliament and received the Royal Assent within the short period of two and three-quarter hours. Whilst Mr. Attlee, as Deputy-Leader of the House, was beginning his plain and concise statement, Members did not at first grasp the full significance of his words ; but they were soon to realize that they were being asked to suspend all civil liberties for the sake of making sure of being able to regain and retain them at the end of the war. After referring to the very critical and grave situation and to the nation's resolution that the enemy should not succeed, Mr. Attlee quietly told the House that the Government was convinced that now was the time to mobilize to the full the whole resources of the country. "It is necessary," he said, "that the Government should be given complete control over persons and property—not just some persons or some particular class of the community, but over all persons, rich or poor, employer or worker, man or woman—all property."

Members of both Houses of Parliament endorsed this drastic measure without hesitation and it was universally acclaimed throughout the country. This new Act subordinated, in short, every private interest to the interest of the State and gave the Government dictatorial powers. Every citizen became liable to be called upon to perform whatever task or function the Government might decide to be necessary for the successful prosecution of the war at a remuneration fixed by the Government. It gave the Government power to take full control of any works or business, including banks, or to close down redundant undertakings, to control wages, and to take 100 per cent. of all excess profits made during the war.

That this did not indicate a readiness to sacrifice private rights unnecessarily was shown very clearly in subsequent debates. A supplementary Bill [Emergency Powers (Defence) (No. 2) Bill], designed to set up special courts in certain circumstances and certain areas, received very rough treatment from all sides of the House and would almost certainly have led to the Government's defeat had various amendments been rejected. As it was, the discussion pushed the debate on Sir Kingsley Wood's budget into the background, although it is a tradition that so important a financial measure takes precedence over all other discussions.

The amended Defence Regulation 18 B gave the Government sweeping powers for the arrest and detention, without public trial, but with the right to appeal to the Advisory Committee, of members of organizations "which have had associations with the enemy or are subject to foreign influence or control and may be used for purposes prejudicial to the national security," which was announced in the House of Commons on May 24th. This new provision, explained the Home Secretary (Sir John Anderson), enabled him already to order the detention of a number of persons who were leading members of such organizations. These persons, it was soon learned, included Captain A. H. M. Ramsay, Conservative Member of Parliament for Peebles and president of the Right Club; two former Members of Parliament, viz. Sir Oswald Mosley, leader of the British Union of Fascists, and Mr. John Becket, secretary of the British People's Party; and several leading members of the British Union of Fascists. The Home Secretary stressed that this action had not been taken because of any opinions held or expressed by the persons arrested, but was purely precautionary. Questioned subsequently about the activities of certain other societies, Sir John Anderson assured the House that such matters were under constant review.

The by-elections during the first nine months of the war brought no surprises and made no important difference in the membership of the House of Commons. The electoral truce agreed to at the beginning of the war was faithfully observed by the contracting parties, and the only outstanding feature of the by-elections which were contested was the repeated crushing defeats of the anti-war candidates.

After making a brief survey of the life of the War Parliament to the end of its ninth month, certain conclusions seem scarcely to be escaped. The staunch advocates of pre-war collective security through the League

of Nations have gained the ascendancy. Sir Samuel Hoare is no longer a member of the Government ; Lord Simon is not a member of the Cabinet ; and although Mr. Chamberlain has a seat in the War Cabinet, he is outvoted by Mr. Churchill, Mr. Attlee, and Mr. Greenwood, three of the strongest opponents of his pre-war League policy. The deduction is therefore permissible that after the war there will be a reversion to the policy of collective security in some form or other. Under an All-Party Government there is practically no organized Opposition. If this is the most democratic and efficient form of Government in war-time, it may be asked why it should not be equally the best system for a democracy in times of peace. Such a Government, it is pointed out, is the only one that can truly represent the common denominator in pooled public opinion, and it ought to function successfully, without serious majority grievances, if Members of all Parties were freed from Party discipline in Parliament and allowed freely to criticize without fear of the crack of the Party Whip. Thirdly, a big constitutional revolution has already taken place and the relation between the individual and the State has undergone a radical change which can never be entirely revoked. Though certain liberties will be restored to the individual after the war, it now seems that future development must be in the direction of far-reaching State control. One has the impression that the war, with all its abominations, has had, among its advantageous results, a sensible modification of Parliamentary usage which will be invaluable if democratic ideas are to survive and prevail.

CHAPTER 6

PAYING FOR THE WAR

BY W. GORDON WILLIAMS

THE conception of Britain's great national wealth as the vital source of "the sinews of war" was not a new one when war with Germany broke out in September 1939 for the second time in a generation, but the story of the gradual mobilization of our financial resources shows how deeply ingrained was the conservatism of outlook both of Parliament and of the public. From ditch to ditch the old ideas resisted prodigious but unpalatable realities, and it so happened that in Sir John Simon the Government possessed the destined spokesman of this somewhat unimaginative inertia which has always had to be overcome before the nation will squarely face the efforts required for its self-preservation in critical times.

Without going further back than the Boer War, it is interesting to recall the tremendous excitement occasioned by the Transvaal loan, although it was soon to be exceeded by the issue of £60 million of 2½% Consols in 1900 and a further £32 million in 1902. Our national debt in 1902 was below £800 million. In the first months of the 1914 Great War it rose to £1,161,952,000. For the year 1918-19 it reached the total of £7,481,050,000, which was exceeded in most years between that date and 1939. The last "normal" year, before the adoption of special National Defence measures in 1938, that is, 1937, recorded a gross debt of £7,916,412,000.

In other words, we had not begun to pay off the vast debts incurred by the first Great War when we were confronted with the still vaster necessities of the second Great War. It was claimed also that we were impoverished in our foreign investments as compared with the far-off days of 1914, although on the other side of the balance-sheet it had to be admitted by the most pessimistic that the standard of living and the internal wealth of the country had much increased, while our financial strength in relation to the enemy's was much greater.

But the enemy this time was rather like the Chicago gangster prepared

to destroy if he could not steal, and scorning the considerations which dominated "sound finance" so long as by a reckless production and employment of armaments he could bring down the peaceful and wealthy nations in the common ruin, and hope to end up as the military conqueror. Germany's war policy had been candidly stated in Herr Hitler's declaration "we have nothing to lose," and it was the need, revealed in the spring of 1940 as a desperate need, to resist this ruthless and better-prepared enemy, that at last united the British nation on a policy of more thoroughgoing conscription of our economic and financial resources. All "records" tended to be superseded by fresh ones, as they always had in the history of national finance, but at a far more rapid pace than ever before.

But before reviewing the steps by which, after the Munich Conference, the Exchequer gradually moved towards the real necessities of the situation, a glance backward at some comparative results of wars in the modern world will give the reader a better view of the national burden and the national achievement after 1938. By converting the figures that represented direct cost into the equivalent of the British £ as it stood in September 1939, a Bulletin of the Queensland *Economic News* (September 1939) made a table of comparisons from which the following items are selected :

War	Year	Men Killed	Cost in £ millions
Crimean	1854-56	785,000	660
American Civil	1861-65	800,000	2,490
Franco-Prussian	1870-71	280,000	1,030
Boer	1899-1902	69,000	510
Russo-Japanese	1904-05	?	920
Great European	1914-18	12,588,000	28,746

The great cost of the American Civil War, compared with others of last century, might seem surprising, unless it is realized that the economic devastation of war is always in proportion to the degree of economic development of the communities involved in it, and by that token the unprecedented cost of the 1914-18 war promised to be much exceeded, but for some unforeseen early collapse of one side or the other, by its renewal in 1939.

Certain other interesting figures which fill in further details of the background to our story concern the losses of the various countries that were involved in the first Great War. In the spring of 1940 the British

public was warned by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to expect an expenditure of about £6½ million a day, although owing to the long period of comparatively restricted operations the total had actually been much less so far. Again using the £ as it stood in September 1939 as the common unit, and converting other currencies into this, the following war expenditure in £ millions per day can be estimated :

Country	1915	1916	1917	1918
Great Britain . . .	3·8	4·7	4·9	4·4
France	1·7	1·8	1·9	2·7
Germany	3·3	3·3	3·4	4·8
Italy	0·7	1·0	1·1	0·6
U.S.A.	—	—	6·5	8·4

It should be noted that the U.S.A.'s loans to allied countries account for more than one-third of the American expenditure, and for nearly a quarter of the British. Most of these loans, of course, were never recovered. The total British war expenditure amounted to more than a quarter of the entire world expenditure on the war, and was nearly twice the national income for 1913. About 28 per cent. of Britain's war outlay, or some £2,150 million, came from sales of overseas securities and loans from the U.S.A., and of this amount no less than £1,740 million was devoted to loans made to Allies and Dominions. Without making these loans Britain could actually have financed the last war out of her own resources. Before pursuing the significance of this, one more table of comparisons (see page 212) is worth quoting from the Queensland Bureau of Industry's Bulletin.

Death from disease greatly augmented some of the totals of killed, as for example that of Yugoslavia, which includes the terrible consequences of a typhoid epidemic.

In 1913 the national revenue of Britain was nearly £200 million. In 1918 it was £889 million.

Estimates of the total income of the nation vary, but in 1918 the proportion of that income that Great Britain was spending on war purpose was put at about 60 per cent., or about £2,000 million at the purchasing power of 1939. This was achieved partly by heavily cutting down private expenditure on construction and maintenance, employing many people who were normally unoccupied, reduction of consumption, and the stoppage of overseas investments which in 1913 had accounted for nearly 10 per cent. of the national income. Germany's war expenditure from

PAYING FOR THE WAR

Country	Direct Cost of 1914-18 War		Killed	
	In £ millions standing at purchasing power in September 1939 ¹	As per cent. of National Income in 1913	Number	As per cent. of all men aged 15-49 in 1913
U.S.A. . . .	3,915	39	116,000	0.5
Canada . . .	340	51	57,000	2.8
Great Britain . .	7,550	188	744,000	6.4
France	3,100	102	1,320,000	13.2
Belgium	185	49	40,000	2.1
Germany	6,640	110	2,000,000	12.3
Italy	945	80	700,000	9.0
Austria-Hungary .	1,510	137	1,200,000	9.9
Russia	3,700	115	5,000,000	15.6
Roumania	150	91	250,000	13.8
Yugoslavia . . .	45	60	325,000	26.7
Bulgaria	36	30	100,000	10.1
Turkey	110	²	500,000	15.1
Greece	²	²	100,000	7.2
India	280	10	61,000	0.1
Australia	190	61	59,000	4.7
New Zealand . .	50	60	16,000	5.4

Including loans to Allies.

² Not known.

1914 to 1918 was put at £6,640 million (at 1939 values), of which 90 per cent. was financed internally. She raised about £650 million externally, by borrowing from neutral countries and by the sale of securities and other assets. Both these external sources may be said to have dried up several years before the war was renewed in 1939, but meanwhile she had by the end of May 1940 overrun and was exploiting in ruthless fashion Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Denmark, Norway, and the Low Countries, and had occupied a valuable industrial area in North-Eastern France.

Up to this time the British Exchequer had been gradually adapting itself to the ever-growing demands of national defence. Before the war actually began Britain was spending at the rate of £2 million a day, as compared with Germany's (approximately) £3,700,000—which was one of the more obvious signs that Germany was already "all out" in September 1939. But the productive capacity of British industries then was something like 50 per cent. more than it had been in 1918, and she possessed about £3,500 million of overseas assets, most of which could be sold while the American loan market, owing to the U.S.A.'s neutrality policy, remained closed to the Allies. Although industry in the chief countries of the Empire was on a much smaller scale than in

Great Britain, it had increased since 1914 in greater ratio than in Britain. This was especially the case in Canada, Australia, and India.

It was unfortunate that the outbreak of war should have found Sir John Simon in control of the Treasury. Throughout his administrative career he had shown a complete lack of imagination and of constructive ideas. Never was this more noticeable than when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. While claiming to adhere to Liberal tenets, he produced budgets of which any reactionary might have been proud—a little added to this old tax, a little added to that, tinkering here, bolstering there, promises of investigation into this and that, with renewed promises six months later and the postponement of some points (e.g. war profits levy) until after the war was over; all the time demanding the utmost sacrifices from the people but showing a total inability to grasp the gravity of the situation and the immensity of the national needs. He presented his budgets with all the skill of a great forensic artist, so that at first blush they sounded reasonable, but reflection invariably showed the barrenness of their thought. Before his second Finance Bill had passed through the House of Commons Sir John was elevated to the House of Lords as Lord Chancellor, where his undoubted legal abilities might be of some value, and Sir Kingsley Wood became Chancellor of the Exchequer in his stead.

On September 27th, 1939, the House of Commons, in Committee of Ways and Means, listened to Sir John Simon's announcement of further demands to be made on the country, the budgeting of the previous April having naturally proved inadequate. In April 1939, he had to provide £1,322 million, in which was included a Defence expenditure of £630 million. His Budget had been designed to raise from revenue £942 million, and £380 million was left to be borrowed during the financial year. But before the Finance Act was passed in July 1939, the figures for the year's expenditure on Defence had grown to at least a total of £730 million and consequently, if the revenue contribution remained unaltered, the amount to be borrowed came to about £480 million.

"I said at the time," the Chancellor told the House, "on the third reading of the Finance Bill, that as things stood the amount of borrowing that would be involved by way of supplement to what was being raised by taxes would not fall far short of £500 million. As the Committee will see from the White Paper which will be available when I sit down, those figures at that time were almost exactly right. The total expenditure authorized when Parliament rose in August was £1,453 million, of which £502 million was to be

borrowed. Those totals, vast as they are, were, of course, arrived at on the basis that while we were forced to undertake increasing Defence expenditure for the protection of the country, we remained at peace throughout the year. But on September 3rd we found ourselves at war, and a Vote of Credit, as the Committee will remember, for an additional £500 million was promptly proposed and adopted."

He could not guarantee that this first Vote of Credit would be sufficient for all requirements up to March 31st, 1940, but even if it were, the need for a new Budget at once was evident, because in that current financial year there must be a total outlay of nearly £2,000 million. Moreover, the original calculation of £942 million revenue from taxes needed scaling down, as the yield was unlikely now to exceed £890 million. Continuing his introduction to the new Budget proposals, the Chancellor made an excellent generalization :

" War makes inroads into our finances and consumes our resources in a way which far exceeds even the most elaborate and costly programmes of Defence carried out in time of peace. Not only does it upset peace-time estimates of what taxes will produce, and completely alter the scales in which national effort and national sacrifice must be measured, but a great war in which this country is engaged sets for us a special economic problem of immense urgency and gravity which I will try briefly to define. If this problem is not promptly faced, if it is not boldly handled, then our power to carry the war through to a victorious conclusion is very gravely weakened and the damage that may be done to our national life after the war is won may be irreparable."

To this able presentation of a laudable policy, Sir John Simon added a few general observations on the need for sacrifice, which only seemed in the ultimate issue to emphasize the difference between promise and performance, and to remind the growing number of the Government's critics that it did not represent the national will to victory nor reflect our full resources in able statesmen. Since the Government must make enormous demands on industry for war purpose, observed Sir John, it must also secure a corresponding reduction in civilian demands on industry, which though with the word "corresponding" a questionable statement, nevertheless suggested that the Government might really be going to mobilize the national energy in a thoroughgoing way. Steps must be taken, Sir John asserted, to counteract the loss to industry of man-power,

but his main concern appeared to be to avoid "a competitive scramble" between civilian and war demands on industry, which would cause prices to rise and the value of money to fall. He had already expressed his anxiety to avoid inflation and appealed for the transfer of as much to new loans as possible from the resources that might be devoted to fresh capital expenditure.

The trouble with all these pious declarations and hopes was that they revealed an alarming incomprehension of the *magnitude* of the demands that the war must make on the economic energies of the country, so that in effect they were within twelve months to be obliterated by much bigger considerations. While export trade had to be stimulated as much as possible, even export trade had to take second place before long to the demands of the life-and-death struggle against Germany, and curtailment of civilian consumption became an inevitable and ever-increasing accompaniment of war production and all forms of war service.

The Government's conservative attitude at this time, however, is most clearly indicated by the Chancellor's main specific proposals. He raised the Income Tax from 5s. 6d. to 7s. 6d. in the £ in a full year. For 1939, which was already half-way through, the standard rate would have to be 7s., which he thought might be regarded as a composite rate made up of the 5s. 6d. for the first quarter of the year and 7s. 6d. for the other three-quarters. Special provisions would help those whose income in the current year had substantially fallen. If a tax-payer's income had dropped as much as 20 per cent. owing to war circumstances, he would be entitled to substitute the current year's income in his return for the previous year's income. Certain reductions in existing allowances would be incorporated in the Finance Bill, though with one exception they would not come into operation till the following financial year. The exception—the change that would operate at once—was that instead of the first £135 of taxable income being charged at 1s. 8d., the new charge would be 2s. 4d., i.e. one-third of 7s. In the following year the figure must revert to the fraction of one-half of the standard rate, as Lord Snowden had made it in the crisis Budget of 1931. So, if the standard rate should be 7s. 6d. the following year, the half-rate would become 3s. 9d. At the same time this would be counterbalanced by increasing the reduced-rate zone, from the present £135 up to £165. Earned income allowance, now one-fifth, with a maximum of £300, would have to be one-sixth, with a maximum of £250. The marriage allowance would be

£170 instead of £180, and the allowance for children £50 instead of £60. The changes would begin to operate in the following year.

The estimated yield of these changes was £70 million in the current year, and £146 million in a full year. As for Surtax, it was planned to raise from this an extra £8 million in a full year by making the new Surtax scales run from 1s. 3d. at £2,000 to 9s. 6d. for incomes over £30,000—which came to 17s. in the £ for any part of the income beyond £30,000.

A further 10 per cent., added to the 10 per cent. imposed in the spring, would be put on the Death Duty on estates exceeding £10,000 and not exceeding £50,000. The maximum rate of Estate Duty on the largest estates would thus become 60 per cent. The yield of the new increase was estimated at £6 million in a full year.

Passing from direct taxation, the burdens of which he described as unprecedented, the Chancellor turned to indirect taxation and announced further increases of Customs and Excise duties. By agreement with the French Government—since the change was in contravention of the Anglo-French Trade Treaty of 1934—imported wines and spirits from France were to be further taxed. Light wines from France would be taxed an extra 2s. a gallon, as also would British wines, and 4s. a gallon would be added to imported heavy wines. On beer, 24s. per 36 gallons, equal to 1d. a pint, would be added; the increase was expected to raise an extra £11 million in 1939 and £27 million in a full year. The duty on spirits would be raised by 10s. per proof gallon, an addition of 1s. 3d. on a 12s. 6d. bottle of whisky, and the increase was expected to raise £2 million in 1939 and £3½ million in a full year. On tobacco the basic duty was 11s. 6d. per lb., the figure having been raised to this from 9s. 6d. the previous April. Now the Chancellor proposed another 2s. increase, making another 1½d. an ounce. It would be accompanied by a corresponding increase in the other tobacco duties, such as on cigars. The estimated yield of the increases in tobacco tax were £8 million for 1939 and £16 million in a full year. Sugar duties would be increased 1d. a pound on the fully refined product, with corresponding increases on molasses, glucose, and saccharine. The estimated yield of these increases was £8½ million that year and £18 million in a full year.

These tinkering with existing direct and indirect taxes were followed by “two more large issues,” which did indeed open up larger questions of war-time finance that were to be debated for many months in the Press as well as in Parliament. “Both were referred to,” said the

Chancellor, "in the statement that the Prime Minister made on April 27th when the House approved the introduction of compulsory military training. The first has to do with excess profits in war-time." In that speech by Mr. Chamberlain, the Prime Minister had announced the Government's intention to limit the growth of profits of armament firms. It had been given effect by the Armaments Profits Duty incorporated in the Finance Bill at the time. Mr. Chamberlain, however, had also said that if war came upon us, "we intend that a system shall be introduced to deal with all profits arising out of war, and not merely with profits arising out of armaments." The Chancellor now announced that in fulfilment of that undertaking he proposed an Excess Profits Tax modelled on the Armaments Profits Duty.

"In essence, the system devised for Armaments Profits duty will be applied over the whole field of trade and industry generally, and, in consequence, there will be no further need to deal with armaments profits separately. The proposed Excess Profits Tax will, therefore, be a tax of 60 per cent.¹ on any excess of the profits of any trades or business since March 31st (1939) over their profits for a pre-war standard. The pre-war standard will be arrived at by the use of the same alternatives as we adopted in connexion with Armaments Profits Duty, and in the case of new businesses there will be a standard arrived at on similar lines. I cannot at present estimate—I cannot attempt to estimate—the yield of this taxation. It is unlikely to bring in any considerable revenue in the current year, both because of the machinery of assessment and collection which will have to get going and because, in the majority of cases, the accounting period for which the tax will be payable will be a period ending at some date hereafter."

The National Defence Contribution would remain in operation, but only as an alternative to the Excess Profits Tax, so that what was collected from a particular business would, in effect, be whichever of the two taxes happened to be the higher.

It is pertinent here to contrast this Excess Profits Tax proposed by Sir John Simon, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the French Government's severe control of profits. Just as the French nation had already to a far greater extent been enrolled in war service of one kind or another, so its financial mobilization was more thorough than the British. The French Army's nominal pay reflected its constitution as a truly national and civilian conscript army. The French soldier was also

¹ Later this was increased to 100 per cent.

rewarded far less for special services. Thus all French soldiers with technical qualifications who could be spared from the army had to work in the factories engaged in the production of war material at the same pay as they received in the army, though with living allowances. On the employers' side, the Government restricted all profits to 6 per cent., and appropriated any beyond this, so making the firms engaged in essential industries into servants of the State to a degree that in Britain had not yet been attempted.

The second of the "large issues" which Sir John Simon dealt with before concluding his emergency Budget speech, concerned not increased profits but additions to the capital wealth of individuals during the war. On April 27th, Mr. Chamberlain had said :

"It should be remembered that the changes which are induced by war may alter very materially the relative values of property, and that whereas some may be enriched others may be impoverished. It is doubtful whether the matter can be dealt with effectively during the progress of the war until the permanent change in value has been established, but I think it is possible that the subject could best be grappled with by a levy on war-time increases of wealth, such as was examined by the Select Committee in 1920, but not at that time proceeded with. I want to say again to the House that we are studying this matter further at the present time, so that we can work out a scheme which can, without delay, be put into operation if ever the occasion should arise."

Now, six months later, the Chancellor stated that this matter was still "being further studied," and expressed the opinion that the kind of levy contemplated could not usefully be attempted until the war was ended. He thought that the severe taxation of income during the war would "powerfully tend to prevent and forestall accumulations of war wealth," thus by implication denying the already admitted desirability of the levy, and also ignoring the lessons of the previous war. Leaving the situation like this, Sir John Simon's Budget policy, at first widely approved, began to draw an increasing fire of criticism as the months passed, and still more when the war reached an active stage in the spring of 1940. Meanwhile, he comforted his audience with the observation that the financial problems confronting Germany must be far greater than our own, especially stressing the fact that German currency was valueless outside the Reich and continually depreciating inside. He pointed out that the further taxation he had proposed represented an

addition to our revenue of £107 million for the current financial year and £226½ million in a full year. But he omitted to warn his hearers that even so, all the extra taxation provided scarcely more than enough to pay for one month's war expenditure.

Mr. Attlee, for the Labour Opposition, while sympathetic, adverted to the wholesale wastage, of both material and labour, still going on, and pointed out that while there was great waste in employing people improperly there was even greater waste in not employing them at all. He and other speakers regretted that some of the taxes were going to reduce the resources of many people who were not getting enough of the national income as it was, but he thought that "the real thing at the back of this Budget is to emphasize the need of a proper rationing system in this country and the proper utilization of our resources." The steep rise in the Income Tax was to be expected, though they should remember that the Income Tax at the beginning of the war was already a great deal higher than at the beginning of the last war. Moreover, we had an enormous debt hanging over us that was incurred during the last war.

"That must not occur again. At the end of this war we must not find that the men who have fought and worked are in debt to those who merely lend to the Government. One of the factors that has disorganized the world since the last war has been the piling up of these immense debts."

Regarding the levy on wealth, he welcomed the taxation of war profits, but thought the best thing would be to have no war profits at all. The plan to make some kind of levy at the end of the war on those whose capital wealth had increased during the war was based, however, on an assumption, which was false, that there was already a more or less just distribution of wealth in this country. He objected to a levy on war wealth because it was concerned only with making a levy on the unequal fortunes of war profiteers, and ignored other profits that were being made.

Sir Archibald Sinclair, for the Liberal Opposition, stressed the importance of economy and recommended a Select Committee of the House on Expenditure, similar to one that was appointed during the last war, to see that the nation got value for money. The point was stressed by subsequent speakers. But Captain Hammersley (the Member for East Willesden), in the words of the speaker who succeeded him—Sir Richard Acland—"seemed to get down to the really deep

problems of war budgets instead of the small details of this Budget." Captain Hammersley reminded the House that "over 70 per cent. of the cost of the last war was carried forward" and imposed a burden of nearly £250 million per annum on future generations, a burden which was intensified by subsequent deflation.

"The authority of certain sections of the community was enhanced by that burden and the position of the producers was depreciated. The result was a weakening in certain trades, including agriculture, and it was of such a character that up to this time those trades have never recovered. If we are to endeavour to finance this war on something like the same kind of lines as those on which the last war was financed, I want to make one or two comments. I wonder whether it is realized by what kind of process the loans were raised. The banks utilized War Loan to the extent of 80 per cent. of value as a collateral security. That means to say that any person who wanted to invest £100 in War Loan was able to do so by providing only £20 of his savings. The remaining £80 came from manufacturers and credit. The result of this creation of a tremendous volume of bank credit was inflation, and we are all concerned to avoid the spiral of rising prices followed by the spiral of rising wages. It is impossible to avoid that spiral if we have monetary inflation, and monetary inflation cannot be avoided if we have excessive borrowing. . . ."

He thought that if they attempted to finance the war by borrowing some 70 per cent. of the cost, as in the last war, an intolerable burden would be imposed on the producing classes by a greatly augmented rentier class. In an effort to pay as much as possible during the war, he thought that in the emergency it might be feasible to obtain a contribution from capital during the war instead of waiting until after it was over. He wanted to know why the Chancellor was still "studying the point" of a substantial levy of the growth of capital. One of the things to be done at once was to ask for the return of the capital of all Income Tax payers.

Many other points were raised by speakers in the debate, though there was little serious criticism. Mr. David Adams reminded the House that besides unemployment and insecurity, undernourishment due to low wages was common in the country, and that 50 per cent. of the industrial workers were still being inadequately paid. He quoted the example of the county of Durham as the most impoverished county in the kingdom, despite the fact that it had produced a

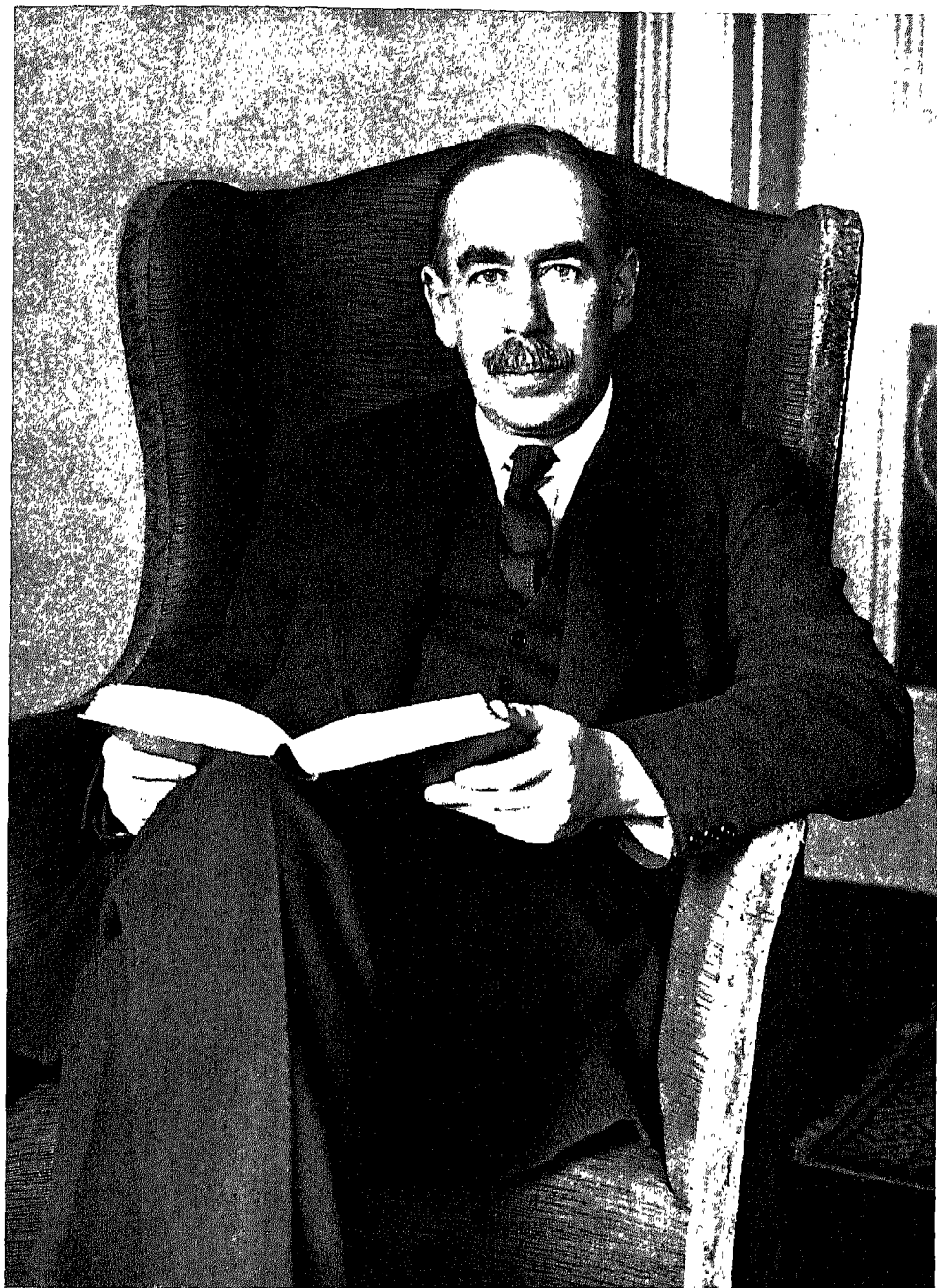
greater amount of wealth over a period of years than almost any other county. He complained that the Ministry of Health had been unjustified in bringing all housing progress to a standstill, since the workers were still suffering from want of adequate accommodation, while the building labour, now joining the unemployed, was not wanted in munitions industries. He thought the Chancellor, in seeking sources of income, should consider the taxation of land values, which he was advised would yield £100 million in the first year. He recalled that in other days the Chancellor himself had been a most ardent advocate of the rating and taxation of land values. On the subject of a tax upon wealth, he thought the Government was not fulfilling its pledges in postponing such a tax until after the war. He thought that a tax each year that the war continued should be imposed, and that it might be levied on fortunes over £20,000. There were 120,000 persons in the United Kingdom who owned in the aggregate £10,000 million, so that a 2 per cent. tax would bring in each year the sum of £200 million.

In these suggestions and these attitudes towards the first war-time Budget revealed in the House of Commons debate, it is possible to see the first emergence of more or less revolutionary ideas for a severe mobilization of the national resources, ideas which had often been voiced before but had been again smothered by the possibility of conserving the system as it stood. The necessities of the war were to compel the adoption of bolder measures than the Government had yet proposed. Meanwhile, independent criticism outside the House was calling attention to these more drastic possibilities, and the Government was soon to issue small Savings Certificates of 15s. and £5 Bonds bearing 3 per cent. interest, in a national thrift campaign for collecting genuine savings. Parliament had just passed a vote of credit for £500 million, as well as the new Budget taxation. The following March Sir John Simon was to ask for another credit vote of £700 million; he then announced that the country's expenditure was at the rate of £6½ million a day.

Naturally, and rightly, a large sum was accounted for by the A.R.P. organizations. On November 30th Sir John Anderson stated that the average weekly expenditure, including the Emergency Fire Services, in October, had been estimated at £775,000. Early in December there were more than a million A.R.P. workers registered as available, and 700,000 trained people in industrial firms. In this month Sir John Anderson showed that little reduction in costs had been effected as the result of the (possibly in some details ill-considered) Press campaign for economy, and

that the Exchequer was bearing nearly the whole cost of paid A.R.P. services, which now came to about £3,750,000 a month. By the time of the new Budget in the spring of 1940 the sales of Savings Certificates and Defence Bonds totalled nearly £100 million, and more than 50,000 savings groups had been established in offices and factories throughout the country, but though the response had been better than expected, it seemed unlikely that this could be maintained, as civilian economy would necessarily slow down with the increasing strain of war. And though the collection of genuine savings was useful, even the excellent response so far made to the thrift movement could not provide more than a small fraction of the nation's financial requirements.

Hence the added value and significance of independent criticism, the most noteworthy in the autumn of 1939 being the discussion opened by Mr. J. M. Keynes in *The Times*. He entitled his articles "Paying for the War," and in them stressed the obvious inadequacy of the Government's financial measures up to date, however unavoidable a piecemeal policy may have been. Mr. Keynes's chief argument was for a scheme of compulsory savings on the ground that only by tapping the earnings of the great mass of people could any really substantial amount be mobilized. He claimed that without hardship, some £400 million a year could be diverted from unnecessary consumption in this way, and in the face of some unfavourable criticism he suggested in a letter to the *Manchester Guardian* in the following February that "deferred pay" might be a better term than "compulsory savings." The Keynes plan essentially depended on family allowances and a rationing scheme. In fact, it looked like an attempt to imitate up to a point the French economy. Mr. Keynes admitted the good results obtained so far from voluntary saving, but pointed out that it could not be relied upon to continue and was inadequate anyway. His plan from the first was viewed with suspicion by the Labour movement, but to their objections he answered that if voluntary saving proved inadequate, the working classes would necessarily be cheated of their increased earnings by the rise of prices or by taxation. Whereas if they were compelled to postpone the use of the whole of their earnings, they would benefit meanwhile by getting better value for money and be acquiring something to fall back on later. To safeguard the workers as consumers, Mr. Keynes proposed a minimum ration of a limited list of necessary commodities. No absolute undertaking should be given as to future prices, but "it should be agreed that in the event of any rise in the cost of the minimum ration the trade unions



J. MAYNARD KEYNES, C.B., M.A., F.R.A.

would be free to press for a corresponding increase in wages." This, of course, would be conditional on the scheme for deferred wages being accepted.

In reviewing the Keynes pamphlet, Professor J. R. Hicks (*Manchester Guardian*, February 27th) suggested that the case for a minimum ration might be stronger when conceived of as an alternative to family allowances, not as an accompaniment of family allowances. He wrote :

" Mr. Keynes's more generous proposal would, of course, be desirable, if we could afford it ; but before making up our minds in its favour we ought to count the cost. The family allowances are reckoned to cost £100 million a year, and this is not a £100 million which can be borrowed or soaked out of the rich ; it is a £100 million which has got to be raised from other members of the same class as those who get the benefit from it. Mainly as a result of these two concessions (the family allowances and the minimum ration) Mr. Keynes has put up the amount to be raised in deferred pay from £400 million to £600 million."

Admitting that the cost of family allowances might be greatly reduced if they were restricted to families of a certain size, Professor Hicks eventually gave the scheme a qualified approval, but added that it seemed to let the capitalist class off scot-free—possibly to be dealt with by a levy after the war. But if the compulsory savings were to be made law, they would appear unjust unless the capital levy were definitely fixed in advance, and even then it would still be inequitable, "since an actual present sacrifice is worse than a problematical future one." It seemed better to compel the wealthy to pay their share during the war.

We have here the gist of the most serious objections to the Keynes plan that were actually raised also by representatives of Labour, and the avoidance of the scheme by Sir John Simon when he introduced his Spring Budget in 1940 was no doubt strengthened by the objections of the Labour Party. The Government was, however, no doubt sincere in considering the Keynes plan too drastic.

It was on April 23rd that Sir John Simon presented a new Budget which contained proposals for raising £1,234 million in taxation during the coming year. When he came to the Keynes plan he explained his reasons for relying on voluntary lending for the present. As an example of the severity of the deductions proposed in the Keynes plan, he said that a married man paying £31 of the current year's income tax would also have to contribute compulsorily a further £68.

"I have examined this proposal," he said, "and several variants with the most anxious care. If they appeared to be the best means of financing the war, or still more if they appeared the only solution to the very serious financial problems we are facing, I should not hesitate to urge their adoption, but I am far from being convinced that such a scheme has all the merits which some quarters have claimed for it."

He advised stimulating to the utmost the voluntary response to appeals for savings. He was even prepared to see that existing rules governing the application of the means test should be modified so as to remove the fear that such war savings might be taken into consideration in public assistance payments. Legislation would be required, and its general effect would be to withdraw from the calculation of means for the purpose of unemployment assistance the new money lent to the nation during the war up to a total of £375, which was the maximum that an individual could have in war savings. The provision applied to National Savings, Defence Bonds, Post Office Savings Bank, and Trustee Savings Bank; but it would have to be new money, not money transferred from funds of some sort.

One of the more important supporters of the Chancellor's decision to avoid the methods of the Keynes plan was Mr. Pethick Lawrence, a Socialist Party authority on finance. He thought that it would be exceedingly difficult to administrate, would be unjust as between one individual and another, and would not yield the results that Mr. Keynes appeared to expect. The injury that it would do to the voluntary system also would leave but a small margin of net gain.

Mr. Pethick Lawrence then dealt with the Government's suggestion for a post-war capital levy.

"After the last war ending in 1918-19," he said, "the country was left with a very heavy burden of debt. We have it today. At that time I was not in this House, but I pressed very strongly for a capital levy on all wealth for the purpose of sweeping away at any rate a very large part of that debt, and I believe that there are many people who opposed it then who have since come round to the view that it would have been a good plan for the country as a whole. Before this war started I urged the Chancellor of the Exchequer to impose a different burden—a war-tax on wealth to make a contribution towards the cost of the war. He resisted that proposal then, and resisted it when I put it forward later. But the Government have said—and the Chancellor repeated the

statement yesterday—that it is their intention, if they are in office when the war is over, to impose a levy upon increases of wealth during the war. That levy, of course, will not be imposed on those who have not increased their wealth during the war, as I understand the Government's proposal. The first comment that I wish to make upon it is that it is quite inadequate to meet the requirements. If the debt is increased during the war by several additional thousand million pounds, I cannot see that a levy bringing in a few hundreds of millions will really achieve the purpose. The Government, of course, are anxious to apply this tax because they say people ought not to make money out of the war. That is quite right as far as it goes, but what the Government are in effect saying is, 'We want to restore the position which existed before the war,' that is to say the position in which certain people were extraordinarily rich and certain people were extraordinarily poor. That is just what we on these benches do not want to restore after the war, because we believe that that was an ugly structure of society, an unstable one, that it was already decaying and that it will not be possible to restore it when the war is over."

Criticism was heard from both sides, Conservative as well as Opposition, that the huge new Budget, planned for an expenditure of £2,667 million in the current year, was in fact a sign of an inadequate national effort to counterbalance the enemy's. Mr. Graham White said that Germany had reached the peak of her expenditure, somewhere between £3,000 million and £3,500 million, but undoubtedly the joint production of France and Britain, when—and only when—their overwhelmingly superior resources were mobilized—might reach a maximum of £4,500 million. Moreover, as to the £1,234 million which the Chancellor proposed to raise from taxation, though it was formidable and unprecedented, perhaps an attempt ought to have been made to raise an even larger proportion of the proposed expenditure by taxation. A few weeks later, when the Cabinet was reconstituted, the view gained strength that the Government's Budgeting for the war indicated a failure to realize the size of the task facing the nation.

The 7s. 6d. in the pound standard Income Tax, planned in the emergency Budget of the previous September, was confirmed by the new Budget, with the reduced allowances, while the Surtax for 1940-41 was made applicable to income over £1,500 instead of £2,000; but the new rates were not to come into force until the following year. From the point of view of the public, the other interesting features of the Budget

were taxes that involved another 1*d.* a pint on beer, an increase of 15*s.* per proof gallon on spirits, or 1*s.* 9*d.* a bottle, thus bringing the retail price of whisky to 16*s.* a bottle. Another 3*d.* an ounce was added to tobacco, and cigarettes, which had risen before from 6*d.* to 7*d.* for ten, now rose again, prices varying with the brand of cigarette, 8½*d.* being a common price. Matches became 1½*d.* instead of 1*d.* a box, and the duty on lighters was raised from 1*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* Postage on letters was raised from 1½*d.* per 2-oz. packet to 2½*d.* and postcards to 2*d.* Letters to overseas forces were to remain at 1½*d.* Telephone charges were raised 15 per cent., there was an addition of 2*d.* to the shilling night trunk call beyond 50 miles, the basic charge for telegrams became 9*d.* instead of 6*d.*, and greetings telegrams were raised from 9*d.* to 1*s.*

The main surprises of the Budget were proposals for a Purchase Tax on prices of commodities at the stage when the wholesaler is selling to the retailer, and the limitation of dividends paid by public companies during the war. While these dividends were not to exceed the rate paid in any one of the three pre-war years, the issue of bonus shares was also to be prohibited. The Government repeated its promise that if large war fortunes were made by individuals, "effective and appropriate action" would be taken by the Government—after the war. This failed to placate the more fundamental critics of the Government's unimaginative financial policy. The most novel proposal, that for a Purchase Tax, which appeared to be inspired by a similar fiscal device in North America, met with severe opposition both from the Labour speakers and from the representatives of the trades most likely to be affected. The main charge was that the tax, besides causing dislocation, would be merely passed on to consumers—most of whom could not afford it—probably with an addition made by the middlemen. Sir John Simon's defence of it was that it ought to raise large sums of revenue, and would not injure our export trade. It became clear during the days of debate following the Budget proposals that in this matter the Government might not have the backing of the House, but the limitation of industrial dividends was supported, in spite of the opposition of the City of London.

Much of the criticism of the Government was based on the fact that spending had been considerably below estimates, indicating that the supply departments were behind schedule and the nation's man-power far from mobilized. The Chancellor reminded his hearers that he had warned them that it was uncertain in September whether the first vote of credit of £500 million would be sufficient to cover our expenditure to the end

of the year, March 31st, 1940, but actually that vote had been under-spent by £91½ million. The expenditure for the last year had amounted to £1,816,873,000, instead of the emergency Budget estimate of £1,933,341,000. Hence they had saved no less than £116½ million. The revenue estimate of £995 million had been exceeded, however, by £54 million. Tobacco had produced £9,700,000 more revenue than anticipated; spirits £1,700,000 more; sugar £4,600,000 more, and beer £750,000 more. He said that the most surprising instance of revenue yield beyond expectations was that of the motor-vehicle duty. Despite the increased licence on private cars, the black-out, and the rationing of petrol, this had produced £34 million against his estimate of £22 million. Altogether, they had spent £1,817 million, and found out of revenue £1,049 million, and borrowed the balance of £768 million. The National Debt, which was £8,163 million at the beginning of the last financial year, had increased to £8,931 million on March 31st, 1940. A total of £122 million had been received during the year from the Savings Certificates and Defence Bonds.

The Chancellor estimated the expenditure in the coming year at £2,667 million, of which £2,000 million would be for war purposes only, the remainder being for debt charges and civil supply services. It was pointed out that the estimates were provisional and must depend on the progress of the war. Many important details were suppressed on the grounds of public policy and the expenditure of the three Defence Departments, for instance, and of the Ministry of Supply, had been grouped together as a total of £1,615 million. The Ministry of Shipping was charged with an expenditure of £382,000. It came into the A Group in which the Defence Departments were included. Under Group D was "provision for services which in the public interest cannot be specified." This group accounted for £146½ million. Other services in Group A were as follows :

Ministry of Food	£2,099,000
Ministry of Economic Warfare	432,000
Ministry of Information	1,883,000
Ministry of Home Security	96,314,000
Ministry of Health (War Services)	35,110,000
Department of Health for Scotland (War Services)	4,775,000
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (War Services)	4,775,000
Department of Agriculture for Scotland (War Services)	560,000

In Group B were included the excesses on Civil and Revenue Estimates, totalling £18,547,500, among which was £1½ million for Police (England

and Wales), £6,027,000 for Public Buildings, and £3½ million for Stationery and Printing. Group C services totalled £73,136,500, including £55 million for the Ministry of Food (Trading Services) and £15 million for the Ministry of Supply (Trading Services).

Most of the Press, especially the *Daily Telegraph* group, confirmed the general public's comfortable feeling that we were getting on very nicely, and that the Chancellor had very cleverly budgeted to cause us the minimum of inconvenience. Only gradually did the more thoughtful and courageous view of the critics penetrate the national consciousness, a process hastened by the terribly critical events in May when the German mechanized forces broke through Belgium into North-Eastern France, and the Allied armies there were almost surrounded and very nearly lost. The nation then awoke, and a more vigorous leadership with Mr. Winston Churchill as Prime Minister and some of the most influential Labour Leaders at last co-operating in the Government, encouraged a new mood of determination. The pace of the nation's preparations for the struggle, and the chaos in vital services, were realized at last to be not merely a scandal but a frightful danger to the very life of Britain and her Ally across the Channel. As Mr. Amery, one of the best critics of Sir John Simon's April Budget, observed, it was a grave reflection upon our capacity to reorganize ourselves that the Government then could contemplate an expenditure of about £2,000 million for the war, when we had the direst necessity of achieving a total of £3,600 million at the earliest possible moment if we were to draw level with Germany's war output within the next twelve months and then begin to gain upon her. "That we have to give Germany all that time is indeed gambling with the life of the nation." If a too complacent Government still clung to office before the disaster that overtook the Low Countries and France awoke the British nation, Parliament at least throughout the war period had well justified its existence by the utterances of such plain and clear-sighted critics, even though at first they could not rouse the dull mass of inertia in the country or move the Press to make a bold challenge to a clearly inadequate Government.

In the Press, as in Parliament, there were more discerning critics throughout the period of stagnation. Thus already in the autumn, the *Financial News* (November 20th), apropos of the Keynes plan, said :

"The City has now had several days in which to ponder the plan, and its reactions have been hardly less intriguing than the

plan itself. Out of a babel of views, one fact emerges with disconcerting clarity. It is that business and finance, no less than the workers to whom Mr. Keynes especially appeals, have so far entirely failed to face up to the realities of war finance. For the dominant response to Mr. Keynes has been a sheer incredulity that sacrifices such as he suggests could be either necessary, or practicable."

As we have seen, later objections to the Keynes plan were based on more solid grounds, but it remained an open question whether the principle of compulsory savings might not yet be adopted for want of any other plan of sufficient scope to meet the true war requirements.

The reader will be assisted in surveying the financial situation as it was in the spring of 1940 by considering certain general information assembled in an issue of the *Bulletin of International News*, published by Chatham House in the New Year of 1940. The gross national income of the United Kingdom for the last year of high activity, 1937, was estimated at £5,742 million. From estimates of the national income during the last war, it appeared that the highest proportion ever devoted to the three fighting Services and the Ministry of Munitions was about 43 per cent. in 1917-18, or £1,763 million out of about £4,125 million. Such percentages, of course, were apt to vary in different estimates and contexts, according to the arrangement of certain figures in certain classifications, but the above general statement by the Chatham House expert seems broadly correct, as does his further statement that it was possible in 1940 that a greater proportion of the national income could be spent on the war than was the case in the previous war, because in 1940 the standard of living was higher and the minimum requirements presumably much the same. He therefore estimated that about 45 per cent. of the gross national income, assumed to remain at the level of 1937, could be devoted to war purposes. That gave a possible war expenditure of £2,580 million at 1937 prices. The writer already thought that expenditure on the forces should be beyond what had been achieved by the Government. He calculated on the basis of an expenditure of £3,000 million on the three forces—a possible distribution of personnel as follows: Navy, 400,000; Royal Air Force, 450,000; Army, 2,200,000. This expenditure was the maximum for financing the war out of income, on the 1937 figures. But it will be seen how very greatly it exceeded Sir John Simon's estimated revenues for 1940-41. The writer, however, pointed out that besides the large number of unemployed to be considered

there were reserves of labour that included 4 million women available for industrial work, and an unknown number of usually unoccupied males. There was also the effect of overtime for everybody.

As an example of the variation in estimates, another serious writer, R. W. B. Clarke, in *The Economic Effort of War* (published January 1940), estimated that the national income which the country could earn was £7,250 million. If this is compared with the Chatham House writer's figure for 1937, of about £5,750 million for 1937, it seems optimistic. Even the labour reserves and the extension of overtime could scarcely do more than compensate for the abstraction of over 3 million from industrial life for the fighting Services. But assuming that by special efforts the figure of about £7,250 million were justified, Mr. Clarke made a table showing how such a total would be used in peace-time and could be diverted in war to other uses :

	£ millions	
	Peace	War
War sector	700	3,000
Civil consumption	4,500	2,800
Capital expenditure	800	500
Exports, visible and invisible	900	600
Public services	350	350
National income, plus imports	7,250	7,250

Of the £4½ million for consumption in peace-time, he estimated that £2,850 million was spent by those with £5 a week or under, and £1,650 million by the rest. His suggestion for financing the Budget was a levy on earnings below £5 a week with children's allowances (in fact another version of the Keynes plan), and a 40 per cent. levy on earnings over £5, and further direct taxation to take 55 per cent. on all of the gross incomes between £250 and £2,000 a year, and 75 per cent. of those over £2,000 a year. Much of this levy, however, was very like a drastic extension of income tax. He recommended a tax also on undistributed company profits at 10s. in the £, and thought that the taxation altogether would yield £2,750 million, or two-thirds of the war expenditure, compared with less than one-third which was raised for the last war. In his scheme a capital tax on private fortunes would still be necessary to avoid a huge increase of debt burden after the war, but so much had been virtually admitted even by the Government.

In one of the most valuable Press reviews of the Budget situation, two articles by Adolf Löwe (*Manchester Guardian*, May 21st and 22nd, 1940) examined the mobilization of our economic resources for war, and pointed

out that inadequate though the estimated war expenditure of some £2,000 million for the coming year must be, in financing this mere "instalment Budget" Sir John Simon had so far made definite provision by taxation for no more than 45 per cent. of the total planned expenditure. More than half of that total was thus left to borrowing and to the as yet entirely unknown possibilities of the purchase tax. But the economic aspect of the Budget roused even more doubts than the financial, since the main question had become one of war production, and the problem was how to withdraw speedily from civilian consumption the requisite physical resources that must be thrown into the war effort. It became more obvious that effective mobilization for a totalitarian war could not be carried out by economic methods appropriate to the small-scale adjustments of a peace economy, and that the speedy transfer of a quarter of our national resources to war production could not be achieved by the indirect method of public finance only. The consumer's purchases must be restricted by direct controls. One way was the comprehensive rationing of goods, by methods differing in range and strategy from the existing methods of food rationing. But to serve the purpose of an all-round transfer of resources, rationing would have to be comprehensive, including any commodities, whether scarce or not, the production of which used our resources wastefully or unnecessarily, and it would also have to be for the whole duration of the war. But for goods that could not be conveniently dealt with by rationing, some kind of supply control would have to be introduced.

"The effect of the direct controls," according to Professor Löwe, "on the transfer of resources can be adjusted at short notice to the changing requirements of mobilization. Even with a moderate application of the various methods the effect will be very considerable. To give a rough estimate, we assume that peace-time consumption of bread, potatoes, and milk is maintained, while supplies of other necessary foodstuffs (meat, dairy products and other fats, sugar) and of fuel and light are reduced by 25 per cent. If we were to fix consumption of the remaining commodities (luxury food, clothing, drink and tobacco, and other retail purchases) at 50 per cent., we should reduce aggregate national expenditure by about £1,000 million. After making allowances for the fall in tax revenues we should achieve, in addition to the effect of saving and taxation, present and planned, the net transfer of another 15 per cent. of our national resources."

The best possible testimony to the soundness of the writer's perception that the economic as well as the financial adjustment must be made effective, and that the hitherto much disliked system of direct controls of consumption would be necessary, was the actual course of events during the next few weeks, while the Finance Bill was still being vetted in Parliamentary Committees, and calls upon the nation were being made by Ministers of the new Churchill Government for a maximum effort in war production.

Mr. Ernest Bevin, who had been appointed Minister of Labour and National Service, received special powers, by an Order tabled in the House by Mr. Attlee, to direct labour where it should be required and to prevent firms taking labour away from other firms without special authority. The engineering, civil engineering, building, coal, and agricultural industries were covered by the Order, which also provided that all the vital industries were to work a seven-day week (the Unions had already agreed to the abandonment of summer holidays), and each worker, under a rota system, would get one day's rest each week. As far as possible wages would be regulated through the normal channels of negotiation, while disputes would come before a new National Arbitration Tribunal. Both the employers and the workers had agreed that trade disputes would not be allowed to develop into strikes or lock-outs. Men were to be transferred to agriculture as quickly as possible, and farm workers were to be asked to work seven days a week for the next few months. The scheme also provided for the transfer of skilled men from less important work to war production, and Mr. Bevin, addressing the Building Trade Operatives' conference in London, asserted in strong terms his policy of taking every possible measure to see that not a single man went to the front without being fully equipped. There would be no boom at the end of this war, he said, as there had been after the last. The weapon he could forge now was one not only to carry them through the war but to help in handling the great problems that would arise after it. Public works, public enterprise, and social effort would be needed to absorb millions back into industry and national life, because we could not afford when the war was finished to leave free men standing in queues at Labour Exchanges. He believed that the labour supply body would—after victory was achieved—be a useful instrument for peace. It seemed not to be so much this or that person who had let them all down, but that the system, based on monopoly and big business, had failed to deliver the goods in the hour of trial. One of the things they

were compelled to do was to produce order out of chaos, "and chaos it was" when he and his colleagues in the new Government had begun.

The long-range economic and social implications of the strong Labour co-operation with the new Government were made plain in this address by Mr. Bevin, and subsequently by other speakers, and it was evident that the effect of the new outlook was a transformation in the spirit of labour. Mr. Bevin was able to state that in some instances the workers had recently, to meet the demands of the war crisis, increased production by over 100 per cent. The Government powers controlling the direction and employment of labour resources were now accompanied by the announcement of measures of the kind that Professor Löwe had declared to be essential. An Order was issued restricting the production of hundreds of household articles. It appeared that the Government's policy was to keep its direct controls distinct from the rationing scheme, and foodstuffs were left out of the Order. The task of telling the House of Commons of the Government Order fell to Major G. Lloyd George, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade. It soon became apparent as he explained the provisions, that the new Order was merely a small first step in the right direction. The goods involved included hosiery, pottery, glassware, hollow-ware, cutlery, electrical equipment, clothes, gloves, cosmetics, flap-jacks, fancy goods, and the majority of luxury goods of all kinds. For six months from the date of the Order, retailers of such commodities would be restricted to two-thirds of the supplies they had bought during the six months ending on November 30th, 1939. The calculation was to be based on value, not quantity, so that in some instances at least the quantity reduction would be greater than one-third, as many prices had risen since the previous November. The retail value of the restricted goods was reckoned at £250 million in 1939 so that evidently the economy intended by the Government was mainly in the sense of making easier a diversion of labour from the unessential occupations, as well as freeing some raw material and machinery for other purposes. In the case of cotton piece-goods and make-up goods, supplies to the home market had already been restricted by one-quarter from April 16th until the end of September. The Secretary to the Board of Trade now warned the textile industry that the restriction after September would be by three-quarters of the quantity supplied in the corresponding period of the previous year. The Order also prohibited the supply altogether of certain types of machinery otherwise than for Government departments or export, except by special licence. The system of import

restriction was now to be made comprehensive, and all goods, except certain living animals, would be brought within the import licensing system.

Further changes in the list of reserved occupations were next announced by the Ministry of Labour and National Service, and these tended to encourage the transfer of labour to essential industries. A new reserved occupation schedule raised the reserve age of various groups. Carpenters, cabinet makers, and joiners who were hitherto reserved at the age of 25 were to be reserved at the age of 30 as from August 1st, and those between these ages had the choice of being called up for military service or of transferring themselves before August 1st to the aircraft-production industry. Those in other munition work would also remain reserved. In other instances men whose reserved age was raised from 25 to 30, or from 21 to 25, were told that they would only be called up to work at their own trade, if their skill was such as the Services needed. About 100,000 men in the distributive trades, mainly with managerial experience, were to be reserved at 30 in the food trade or at 35 in other trades. More than 120,000 men in the distributive and agricultural industries were added to the reserved schedule, while some 30,000 "black-coated" workers, such as teachers and Local Government officers, were taken off it. Other "black-coated" workers whose reserved ages were raised from 25 to 30 included B.B.C. staff, Justices' clerks, railway clerks, temporary civil servants, voluntary hospital staffs, and other teachers (including university professors and lecturers). The raising of the reserved age to 30 also included librarians, whole-time members of Observer Corps and some coal surface workers.

These were among the promising—if belated—economic reorganization plans being carried out in Britain while France, after the desperate battle of Dunkirk, was fighting for life against the invading German hordes. France herself, as already indicated, was ahead of us in her economic organization for totalitarian war effort, and another pointer to this was the effective resurgence of the French Air Force by the early summer of 1940, thanks to the very rapid expansion of her aircraft industry, which was nationalized. Financially, that expansion had been far cheaper than our own.

A source of strength to the Allies, in a longer view than that of the serious military crisis of that time, was the high degree of financial and economic co-operation which Britain and France had effected during the winter months, and which was regarded as the nucleus of a kind of bloc of co-operative effort which all nations who shared the ideals of the

Allies might be invited to join. This co-operation extended to the two countries' currency and credit, to their trade agreements, and even to the industrial output of war materials. The usefulness of the agreement was demonstrated by the beginning of June, when consultations with the Governments of invaded Belgium and Holland were completed for the establishment of a Quadripartite Financial Agreement embracing these countries and Britain and France. The first important effect of this pact was to stabilize the exchange-rate and to simplify inter-Allied clearance of debts. The importance of the economic pact resided also in the potential resources of the Dutch and Belgian colonies, which were capable of supplying much valuable material. At the same time, out of the credits that Belgium and Holland could thus establish, and the earnings of their considerable merchant navies which had escaped the enemy, their Governments could defray such expenses as the maintenance of refugees, and of their remaining naval and military forces. The fact that the original pact between France and Britain had been concluded for a period lasting until at least six months after the signing of any peace treaty, and that the victimized Low Countries were now brought into the scheme, promised a significant widening of a possibly permanent economic union which might have far-reaching consequences in a reconstructed Europe.

While these developments did not reduce the immediate peril of the "do-or-die" German military offensive, they certainly increased the probability of an Allied triumph, provided that the German forces could achieve no success of a decisive character before the autumn of 1940. The financial situation of Germany was undoubtedly bad, and her economic situation not much better, notwithstanding the systematic spoliation of the countries she had overrun. She had begun the war, as already pointed out, at the peak of her productive effort, and her financial situation in 1939 contrasted badly with her situation in 1914. Then she possessed about £1,000 million of foreign investments with which to finance purchases, besides gold and other important stocks. She was, in September 1939, deficient in stocks of many essential commodities which she could henceforth import in only very limited quantities, and the Reichsbank returns showed gold holdings and foreign currency amounting to less than 7 million Reichsmarks. Notes in circulation in the Reich had a total face value at least 120 times as much, but this was enormously increased during the ensuing months. Herr Hitler, in fact, was reduced to the methods of the armed gangster to get essential supplies that were

wanted from the remaining neutral countries, a method which was considerably hampered by the British Ministry of Economic Warfare, which made a point of purchasing for cash commodities, especially in the Balkans, that Germany was known to need and to be negotiating for. The much severer rationing of the German civilian population before the end of 1939 was one of the many signs of Germany's internal strain. On the other hand, it would have been better for the Allies if Britain, instead of merely noting with satisfaction the severity of the German civilians' restrictions on consumption, had sooner adopted an effective check to unessential production and imports at home.

So far as purchases abroad affected the course of the war, the position of the Allies was not unfavourably affected up to the summer of 1940 by the "cash-and-carry" provision of the United States Neutrality Law, because their combined foreign credits were more than sufficient to cover any orders for war materials that American industry was as yet in a position to execute. British holdings of foreign securities in Canada alone totalled some £650 million when the war began, and there were large sums in the United States. Agreement between the Allies and the U.S.A. on currency questions had succeeded in maintaining a fair degree of stability in the exchange rates, and it was known that although the United States industries required more time for a big expansion of production of war materials, considerable quantities, especially of aircraft, had been already delivered by the early summer of 1940, and the Government was stimulating expansion by large new rearmament programmes. As in the British and French Empires, the immense resources only waited to be efficiently mobilized, whatever the financial situation might be, and the financial situation was in reality as overwhelmingly superior to that of the enemy's as was the economic. The financial demands of the war, however great, could certainly be met, and in order to put them in clearer perspective, we may supplement the comparisons of the cost of the previous Great War with some figures showing the losses occasioned after the Depression set in in 1929. The losses occasioned in the years 1930-34, measured by the aggregate decline of national incomes below the 1929 level, were as follows :

Country	£ millions sterling	As per cent. of 1929 income
U.S.A.	18,450	127
Great Britain	1,885	40
Canada	1,213	112
Australia	330	59
Germany	1,456	42
Holland	578	102

It could therefore be argued that in these countries alone, the peacetime Depression caused a total loss of £24,000 million, which almost equalled the economic loss caused by the Great War. The United States, of course, lost much more and at a much faster rate. She had lost the equivalent of five months' national income while she was involved in the Great War, but in the Depression she lost as much as fifteen months of national income. Australia lost seven months' income in the Great War, and the same proportion during the Depression. In these figures was another warning to those responsible for economic and financial policy both during and after the renewed war. At the same time they encouraged a hopeful attitude towards the possibility of a wisely directed recovery. The enormous expansion of industry occasioned by the war and the vast financial redistribution of resources supplied evidence that the most "unprecedented" national expenditures were very largely a question of making proper use of the nation's energies. Moreover, as the debts piled up, nothing could ultimately prevent a considerable degree of inflation, which would reduce their real value and the weight of the burden as money became cheaper. But if the bulk of the people were to share in the possible recovery, the community would be compelled to take control of much more of its productive capital, whether by levies or by increasing nationalization of vital services and industries.

That perhaps was the prime lesson to be learnt from the nation's attempt to finance the war.

CHAPTER 7

FRANCE AT WAR

BY HENRY D. DAVRAY

AT five o'clock on the afternoon of September 3rd, 1939, France, true to her undertakings, and in agreement with her Ally, Great Britain, declared war on Germany.

At the same time, in every commune in France, from the largest town to the tiniest village, the mobilization order was posted up on the official notice board at the *Mairie*. In the rural districts the town drummer, slinging his drum over his shoulder, went to cross-roads and market-places, and after the regulation roll of his drum, read the order aloud to the people who had come out on to their doorsteps. The peaceful routine of French life was at an end and the great military machine had been set in motion. In the space of a few days, mobilization took place without a hitch. Over 5 million men joined their depots, received their arms and equipment, and went to their war stations. In other words, every able-bodied Frenchman between the ages of twenty and fifty-eight became a combatant.

France had also created the second largest navy in Europe, which did excellent work in the Great War of 1914-18. On September 3rd, 1939, it consisted, apart from reserve formations and small craft, of 178 units on the active list, totalling 562,300 tons. This navy was manned by an extremely efficient personnel. The officers were trained in highly specialized schools; the men were recruited by entry on the marine register. This registration, introduced by Colbert in the seventeenth century under Louis XIV, covers all Frenchmen between the ages of eighteen and fifty who exercise the calling of sailor or who engage in navigation and fishing for a livelihood. This solid professional nucleus is supplemented by a certain proportion of the contingent supplied by compulsory service. Like the British Navy, the French Navy is a picked body of men, and like it, is inspired by the most glorious and also the most humane traditions.

For some years the mechanization and motorization of the French forces proceeded apace. Each division had its complement of tanks of various sizes, of armoured cars, and of motor lorries for the transport of troops and material. Each artillery regiment included a battery of special anti-tank guns, and the heavy pieces were mounted on caterpillar tracks. The corps of Engineers, consisting of specialized experts, had perfected its equipment for the prompt repair of railway lines and switches destroyed by enemy aircraft. The pontoon detachments were provided with the most up-to-date bridging material. In all arms an immense amount was done to ensure up-to-date efficiency on the technical side—though not—alas! as the tragic outcome was to show—nearly enough to meet the mechanized German Blitzkrieg on even terms.

After a period of delay and hesitation, the Air Force was in full process of development. The factories were turning out, in increasing volume, powerful, handy, and well-armed machines, and a picked personnel was available to fly them. The French Air Force was, however, not quite so up to date as the British and was much smaller than the German.

Germany's successive aggressions against countries powerless to offer effective resistance showed that her leaders were beginning to put into force the plan for the domination of Europe, described in detail by the Führer in *Mein Kampf*. It became clear that at no distant date Great Britain and France would have to call a halt to the aggressors, encouraged as they were by the irresolution of the "plutocratic democracies," who concealed their weakness by attempting a policy of "appeasement," which failed to deceive their opponents.

Germany, moreover, was not alone. Italy's intervention was also to be anticipated, and this would lead to serious hostilities, particularly in the Mediterranean. On its southern shores lies the most developed and wealthiest part of France's empire, comprising Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco. For historical and diplomatic reasons, the two outlying bastions of these possessions, Tunis to the east and Morocco to the west, are administratively and politically separated from Algeria in the centre. Algeria, which was the first to come under French rule, was inhabited by tribes without cohesion and without single leadership. As her authority spread, France organized its territory on the model of the French administration and State. It was divided into three departments, which were linked to the central administration in Paris through a Governor-General, under whom are the Prefects of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine. From

the military point of view, Algeria as a whole constituted the twenty-first area, occupied by the Twenty-first Army Corps, with headquarters at Algiers.

Tunis has been a French protectorate for fifty years. This protectorate was established to put an end to the incessant raids of the Kroumir tribes across the frontier against the Algerian tribes under French authority. After subduing the Kroumirs, the French troops advanced to Tunis, which it was decided to occupy until the Bey's authority over the recalcitrant tribes should be restored. A Resident-General was appointed in the person of M. Paul Cambon, who later became French Ambassador in London and a chief artisan of the Entente Cordiale. M. Paul Cambon proved an admirable organizer. In the space of a few years, the sovereign's authority was restored throughout the territory, as far as the borders of the desert. The nomad tribes ceased their internecine wars, and the sedentary population enjoyed a period of peace which ensured their prosperity. Roads, railways, and other means of communication were built, and the ports of Tunis, Soussa, and Sfax were endowed with the finest modern equipment, while a spacious naval base was established in the roadstead of Bizerta. The Bey's Government was able to pay off all its debts, and since then its budget has shown a surplus, even during the war years of 1914-18. Respect for the sovereign's authority prevented France from annexing Tunis, which still remains a protectorate.

Morocco's history is similar. The country was in a state of complete anarchy when France gained a footing there in 1907. The organization set up by M. Paul Cambon in Tunis was taken as a model by General (later Marshal) Lyautey, when he was appointed Resident-General at Rabat. He, too, was successful in a few years in restoring the sovereign's authority in the plains from Fez to Marrakesh—what he called "the useful country." He built tree-lined roads, railways, ports, and dams, added new quarters to the native towns, developed colonization, exploited the phosphate deposits, and brought peace and prosperity to the country. All who have visited French North Africa have borne witness to the greatness and solidity of France's colonial achievement. It is well known that Tunis is coveted by Italy, and that Morocco is among the French possessions which Germany has assigned to herself, and each would be glad to add half Algeria to her share. To defend these colonies France has organized them on a military basis. Although the maintenance of the Sultan's and of the Bey's sovereignty under the treaties necessitates a

separation of the three countries from the civil point of view, they have recently ceased to be divided militarily. General Nogues became not only Resident-General in Morocco, but was appointed Commander-in-Chief of all the forces in North Africa. The immense area which extends along the shores of the Mediterranean from Gabes to Tangier, and along the Atlantic as far as the Rio de Oro, thus contained an armed force of 2 million men under a single command.

It will be remembered that in 1914 the Germans raised an outcry when France called in her colonial army to make good her inferiority in numbers, an example which was soon followed by Great Britain, when she brought Indian troops to France's Mediterranean ports of Marseilles and Toulon.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of the case, these troops did valuable service, and in face of the renewed German threat in Europe, France diligently pursued the building up of her colonial military contingents. The finishing touches were put by M. Mandel. Under the stimulus of this dynamic Minister, France's overseas possessions went through a period of intense activity in every sphere. Hitherto the organization and co-ordination of the military system had been deficient. The Colonial Minister and his Chief-of-Staff became members of the Supreme Council of National Defence, which enabled them to co-ordinate armament programmes with the home departments of War, the Marine, and the Air, as well as industrial organization and the apportionment of expenditure. Native recruitment was placed on a wider basis. Natives were freely admitted as N.C.O.'s and in the lower ranks of officers; a hierarchy of specialists was created, and the colonial industries were organized with a view to their immediate transformation into war industries.

Indo-China has a well-equipped army of 1,500,000 men, with an air force brought up to date in 1938 and 1939, and a highly efficient personnel. In the large island of Madagascar there is an army of 250,000 men, well able to resist aggression, which indeed could only come from a great distance, from the Mediterranean or the Far East. Equatorial Africa and West Africa between them provide a black contingent of 1,200,000, which is capable of giving valuable assistance to the mother-country.

In short, apart from North Africa, France's colonies alone could provide in first-line and reserve troops a total estimated at 2,870,000 men, of whom 200,000 could be utilized immediately in the mother-

country. In the aggregate the French Empire entered the war with a man-power of 10 millions.

It was in a purely defensive spirit that France entered the war of 1939, and she had built up all her military organization in the same spirit, which Germany's propaganda continually represented as a *spirit of domination, aggression, and conquest*.

It would, however, be difficult to demonstrate that the Maginot Line was built in order to invade the Saar and go on to conquer Germany. It is a calamity that it stopped short at Montmédy, thus leaving what was virtually a great gap along the Belgian frontier to Dunkirk, the perils of which were only too patently revealed later.

Germany's rearmament, against which the Allies shortsightedly failed to apply the preventive measures provided for in the Treaty of Versailles, caused serious anxiety to intelligent Frenchmen. While Great Britain hesitated to rearm and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was preaching disarmament, Germany hardly troubled to conceal that desire for revenge which was to be so cleverly exploited by the Nazis.

In entering upon the negotiations which ended in the Treaty of Versailles, France's chief preoccupation was her security, and later events proved how right she was. She signed the treaty in the conviction that at last her security was assured. Had it not been guaranteed by the United States and Great Britain? But on returning to the other side of the Atlantic, President Wilson was disowned by those on whose behalf he had assumed those obligations. France's disappointment was acute. But at least, she thought, there is still Great Britain's guarantee. Her disillusion was complete when her immediate neighbour, unable to realize that her frontier was on the Rhine, as Lord Baldwin later put it, took America's defection as a pretext for withdrawing in her turn from her formal guarantee. Could France be content with a bare promise that in case of German aggression, Great Britain would come to her assistance?

Most Frenchmen could not understand the wave of out-and-out pacifism which was at that time sweeping over Great Britain. This blindness to what was going on in Germany amazed them. Men like Philippe Berthelot, Painlevé, Loucheur, and even Briand, and many others who continued to shoulder crushing responsibilities, sought an understanding of this—to them—extraordinary attitude of Britain's so that they should be able to build up a stable and durable policy from the point of view of France's security.

At that time, the author of the present article—if a personal reminis-

cence may be permitted—obtained an interview with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald two or three weeks before he became Prime Minister. As far as France was concerned, that sad-faced man seemed to me to have ready-made ideas. He was certainly very ignorant of things French, and his ideas on Europe were superficial and full of prejudices. He took the opinions loudly proclaimed by a few French nationalist groups for those of the whole nation. France was militarist and imperialist. When I objected that this was the perpetual argument of German propaganda, he merely smiled incredulously like one who disdains to refute contradiction. He let me continue, however, as I showed that geographically it was impossible for France to have Imperialist ambitions, being bounded on the west by the Atlantic and the Channel, on the south by the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean, on the east by the barrier of the Alps, by Italy, and Switzerland, on the north by Belgium, and on the north-east by Germany, from whom she is not separated by any obstacle.

If that is so, he objected, why does not France consent to disarm? My retort was an easy one. Was not the fact of having been invaded and devastated twice within living memory a sufficient reason for maintaining forces enabling her to resist the infinitely greater forces of a neighbour who was continually threatening her frontier? I defied him to prove that our army was directed offensively against anyone, any more than the British Navy was. But it was all in vain. I piled argument on argument, but the same vague incredulous smile showed his obstinacy, and he always came back to his programme of disarmament. An example must be set. He no doubt believed himself to be an apostle. This was the man who was to come into power soon afterwards, and to become responsible for the security, not only of Great Britain, but of the British Empire.

It is therefore not surprising that the French resolved to construct on their eastern frontier a line of fortifications which would hold up as long as possible the aggression for which Germany was preparing by rearming in defiance of the Treaty of Versailles. The Inter-Allied Commission of Control had definitely established the fact of this rearmament. This defensive line was conceived by M. Paul Painlevé, the great mathematician who was several times Prime Minister of France. He had plans drawn up by the General Staff, and it was constructed while M. André Maginot was Minister of War, whence its name. For various reasons it stopped short at the end of the Meuse hills, leaving the Belgian frontier uncovered. Had it been continued to the North Sea, events would no doubt have taken a different course.

In the opinion of the many experts who inspected it, the Maginot Line was impregnable. This view the Germans, no doubt fully informed by their spies, appeared to share, for they never attempted to break through it, and themselves remained behind their Siegfried Line, which they claimed to be equally impregnable, and which they had built quite unnecessarily, as France had never had any intention of crossing it by force.

This was fully borne out by subsequent events. After the declaration of war in 1939 and throughout the winter, the French armies stood on their defensive line, vainly waiting for the Germans to make a frontal attack. Perhaps sufficient information will come out later to judge whether this was not the worst error which could have been made. Be that as it may, in the ten days following the mobilization order, the whole first-line army and reserves occupied the defensive lines along France's land frontiers from Dunkirk to Menton, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean, not to mention the Pyrenees, which could not be left entirely unguarded owing to the uncertainty as to Spain's attitude. It should also be remembered that the French Navy was on a war footing, that it had 340,000 tons of new shipping on the naval dockyards, and that there were no obsolete warships.

Such was the formidable military machine which France contributed as her share to the association between the two nations.

On the day on which war was declared, the Prime Minister, M. Daladier, issued an "appeal to the nation," which concluded as follows :

"Men and women of France, we are making war because it has been forced upon us. Each one of us is at his post, on the soil of France, in this land of liberty, which is one of the last refuges of respect for human dignity. You will unite your efforts for the salvation of your country in a profound spirit of mutual help and fraternity."

This peroration was a true reflection of the general feeling. The men of France had gone to their posts in a war which had been forced upon them. They manned their battle stations in a defensive spirit, determined that this time the enemy should not be allowed to set foot on French soil. This was not only for sentimental reasons, but also because the areas near the northern and eastern frontiers were of vital importance to the nation, and without them France would be paralysed.

To realize this it is sufficient to look at the map. The most important

coal deposits, continuing the line of the Belgian deposits, are in the departments of Nord and Pas-de-Calais (in Flanders and Artois). This mining area was the scene of the severest fighting in the last war, and the mines suffered greatly. Many were flooded, and when they retreated before the Canadians, the Australians, and the British engaged in this area in 1918, the Germans blew up those which they had continued to operate. Later enormous sums were spent to recondition them and provide them with modern equipment, with the result that in 1938 their annual coal output amounted to nearly 48 million metric tons.

Farther to the east, between the Moselle and the Meuse, lay the Longwy and Briey basins, from whose rich deposits of iron ore there was an annual extraction of 38 million tons, producing 8 million tons of pig iron, and the same amount of crude steel. All along the frontier from Basle to the North Sea there were industrial and manufacturing centres accounting for 80 per cent. of France's production: metallurgy, blast furnaces, foundries, steel works, chemical works, phosphates, potash, glass, paper, cotton goods, hosiery, woollen goods, cloth, textiles, cutlery, ironmongery, machinery, leather goods, sugar—a prodigious range of activity as essential to the life of the whole nation as the Midlands, Lancashire, the Tyne, and the Clyde taken together are to Great Britain.

This vast area comprises, with Champagne, some of the most fertile districts of France, where wheat, fruit, vegetables, and industrial crops—beetroot, hops, linseed, colza, tobacco—are grown, and cattle, horses, and sheep are bred.

As regards the transport of this intensive production, these areas are crossed by navigable waterways connected with one another by a system of canals which serve the great industrial and commercial centres of Paris, Rouen, Le Havre, Lyons, Saint-Étienne, and, via the Rhône, Marseilles. Transport by water in France is equivalent in volume to one-third of transport by rail. The railways of the north and east form a close network where distances are short and not to be compared with those which separate Paris from Bordeaux, Toulouse, Marseilles, or Nice, for example.

The enormous commercial importance of the eastern and northern railway systems is equalled by their strategic importance. During the period of mobilization they were called upon to carry millions of armed men and huge quantities of material and armaments to the threatened frontier, and this colossal task was performed without a hitch in ten days.

It was this vast machinery, with all its meticulous organization, that the Maginot Line was designed to protect, and it did so for nine months.

But it may well be imagined that this prodigious organization was easy to paralyse. It is common knowledge what "knavish tricks" were employed by the Germans to force the defences of the Meuse, and how the sudden defection of the King of the Belgians enabled them to invade France and take the Maginot Line in reverse. The ensuing dislocation proved irreparable, and provoked the inevitable collapse of French military power.

Could such a power, based on the resources of a nation of 40 million inhabitants, have sufficed against the colossal forces of a country of 80 millions, which had been arming for several years and which was inspired by a religion of conquest preached by a dictator who promised world domination?

If there was any obsession in France, it was that of the defensive. The high command does not seem to have provided for any other alternative. At any rate, after the first attacks had driven back the Germans to their defensive line, the French troops were brought back to their starting-point, and throughout the autumn and winter there ensued a war of skirmishes between raiding parties, a "phoney war" in which the French and British attackers showed greater dash than their opponents, or so the communiqués and military commentators said.

So long as this went on, the Maginot Line appeared to be the impassable barrier which it was designed to be, and on which the Germans never made a frontal attack. It was indeed as useful to them as to the French, who never dared to leave it far behind. Thus protected, the Germans had full leisure to complete their Siegfried Line, to pile up armaments, and to make every possible preparation for a spring offensive.

After the Maginot Line had permitted a 100 per cent. mobilization of the French military forces and had shown that it afforded effective protection, the Government lent an ear to those who said that mobilization had been unnecessarily complete and was paralysing the economic life of the country, and even delaying war manufactures. In consequence, farm labourers over fifty were sent home to do the autumn sowing and the winter ploughing. A number of specialized workmen were also demobilized and sent back to workshops and factories working on Government war orders.

While the Maginot Line was thus fulfilling its function as a barrier, perhaps as useful to the Germans as to the Allies, Great Britain was taking

part in the war to the extent permitted by her naval and military resources.

From the outset the Royal Air Force performed feats which proved the superiority of its material and personnel—in quality, but not in numbers. There can be no doubt that a large part of the Germans' success was due to the enormous numerical superiority of their Air Force. Their mass attacks caused such severe material damage that they frequently held up the action of the opposing troops. Given equality of numbers, the Allied Air Force would soon have swept the skies clear of the enemy. Unfortunately, in modern mechanized warfare, weight of numbers prevails over personal skill and individual bravery. And there is no doubt that the Germans had heavy numerical superiority in the air.

It is worth emphasizing here a fact which has struck many people. One month after Mr. Neville Chamberlain had given way to Mr. Winston Churchill, the new Government's Minister of Supply was able to state in the House of Commons that the war manufactures for which his department was responsible, had doubled. Another new Minister announced soon after that the output of the aircraft factories had increased by 123 per cent. One is forced therefore to conclude that, during the long preceding period, the British war effort had been definitely insufficient.

As to the Allied naval forces, whenever, either in single units or in squadrons, they were able to give battle, they showed their quality and displayed indisputable superiority over the enemy, who suffered losses from their offensive action which paralysed their movements at sea. The Allied Navies, too, severely restricted the activities of the U-boats, guarded the commercial convoys, and ensured the supplies of all the essential products which Great Britain and France received from their Empires and from neutral countries. Here the part played by the French Navy cannot be exaggerated. A British expert wrote, "The modern French Navy is, as regards material, second to none in excellence of design and workmanship," and its personnel "is incomparably of the highest quality," being composed, as observed above, of professional seafarers inspired by the most glorious traditions.

This highly favourable judgment explains the British Government's anxiety to prevent the French fleet from falling later into the hands of the enemy. For, despite their promises, the Germans would certainly have made use of it, when they were in control of the whole of the west coast of Europe from North Cape to Algeciras; for no one is simple

enough to believe that the Spanish dictator would deny the shelter of his ports to the warships, large and small, of his totalitarian colleagues.

Their superiority at sea was a factor to which the Allies attached great and perhaps excessive importance in their expectations of success. It enabled them not only to convoy merchant vessels and thus reduce loss by torpedo to a negligible proportion, but to force neutral vessels to submit to search and confiscation of contraband goods. It has been alleged in some quarters that this supervision was never exercised with all the necessary strictness, especially with regard to Italy. The Allies—for political reasons, no doubt—yielded too easily to Fascist bluster, although it was known for a fact that Italy was importing numerous materials essential to armament manufacture, in quantities enormously exceeding her normal requirements, the surplus obviously going to Germany.

It will be for future historians to judge events, decisions, and acts of which we are the witnesses, but of which we are no doubt incompletely and insufficiently informed and regarding which we are frequently deceived by the censorship and by propaganda.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the Allies overrated their strength when they decided to declare war on Germany.

We have seen the formidable contribution that was made by France. She threw into the balance all her resources in men and material, all her economic strength. Nevertheless, this was manifestly insufficient to outweigh what Germany piled into the opposing scale.

But France was not alone. Her British ally brought her contribution in the conviction that their joint effort would suffice. Events have shown that it did not do so. There are several reasons for this.

Great Britain rightly placed great reliance on her Air Force and her Navy. In the case of the former, we have already seen that, despite its high quality and the skill and valour of its personnel, its numbers were always inadequate to meet the requirements of the situation.

The Navy constituted a formidable asset. The effectives required to man it were not large; it had well-established bases; its supplies and armaments were provided by a complete organization which was already in being and could be expanded rapidly. Great Britain expected that her Navy, with the help of the French squadrons, would enable her to strangle Germany in a blockade which in a few months would begin to deprive her of the essential materials without which she could not continue hostilities.

In the same way as the French were dominated by the conviction that the Maginot Line was impregnable—a conviction which proved to be justified—the British had this immense faith in the efficacy of the blockade. A few months, some thought, would be sufficient to starve out Germany and deprive her of all access to the raw materials which she needed to continue her war manufactures. Simultaneously, the Air Force would carry dismay and confusion into the enemy country, bombing factories, aerodromes, petrol depots, and military objectives of every kind. It may be presumed that those who held this belief made allowance for the fact, which had been demonstrated by the Customs statistics, that Germany had accumulated enormous stocks of all the materials which she needed from abroad. Had she not deprived her population of all kinds of luxuries and comforts for this very purpose? “Guns before butter” was the reply of her propagandists to the rare complaints which came to the surface. Moreover, the Germans obviously expected that use would again be made of the weapon of blockade from which they had so cruelly suffered in the last war, and which had so greatly contributed to bringing them to their knees. Expecting it, they manœuvred to escape it, and they succeeded perhaps beyond their hopes.

The perhaps too exclusive faith in the blockade and in naval power shown by the British had important consequences. Convinced that her wonderful naval strength was her main contribution to the war, Great Britain was relatively slow in building up her Army. Compared with France she was backward in her preparations for land warfare, and her Air Force (like the French Air Force) required to be much increased before an air offensive against Germany could be undertaken. Many preparatory measures to meet the approaching crisis had been taken, but they proved to be not wholly adequate. A very great, but as events proved insufficient, effort was started in the domain of production and supply of armaments.

On October 11th, 1939, the Secretary of State for War informed the House of Commons that the British Expeditionary Force of 158,000 men had been transported to France without a single casualty, and had joined the 5 million mobilized Frenchmen. On November 22nd he said that several thousand more reinforcements were following weekly, and that nearly a million men were under intensive training in Great Britain.

“On January 1st, 1939,” writes Sir Ronald Storrs,¹ “the strength of

¹ *The First Quarter, September-November, 1939*, by Sir Ronald Storrs, K.C.M.G., C.B.E., etc., Hutchinson, p. 262.

the first-line Regular Army in Britain approached 150,000 men. The Army Reserve and Territorial forces brought the total up to perhaps half a million."

Soon afterwards it was decided to double the strength of the Territorial Army and to introduce a measure of compulsory service in order to bring the British land forces to co-operate efficiently with the French armies. Owing to the magnitude of the task, it was to be feared that it would not be accomplished in time, and this fear was justified. At the end of May 1940, only the men of twenty-eight were being registered, and many of those of the previous annual contingents had not yet been called up. Moreover, owing to the large number of reserved occupations, a very considerable proportion of men were not called upon for military service.

Meanwhile, the increase in the strength of the fighting forces involved a comparative increase in their needs, which included an extremely wide range of articles, covering, it is said, 17,000 items, from tanks to tooth brushes. The new Ministry of Supply was responsible for such supplies. A vast and infinitely complicated organization had to be created and set in rapid motion. Nevertheless, at the end of May 1940, the men called up for military service were still being drilled with wooden rifles. It is not a matter of a few weeks or even of a few months to improvise and set in rapid motion a great national war machine of the size required by modern war. The French military organization had taken over a century to reach perfection, yet a few weeks were sufficient to bring about its collapse.

The reasons for this have been indicated above, the chief being the crushing superiority of the Germans in men and material. One conclusion which seems to follow is that if Great Britain had been able to send much larger well-armed and well-trained forces to the Continent in time, the result of the Battle of France might well have been different. After the defection of the King of the Belgians and the re-embarkation of the British Expeditionary Force at Dunkirk, the French Army remained alone to fight against an army with a numerical superiority of three to one, and provided with superabundant material and planes in profusion.

Bismarck once said that Germany could never overcome France and Britain *united*, and Germany's policy was consistently aimed at separating the two Western democracies. She neglected no means to this end, and though an alliance was eventually concluded, it came too late. A considerable section of British opinion for long remained under the influence of German propaganda, and it was not until the advent of National Socialism that Germany's ambitions were realized.

In speaking of France and Britain *united*, Bismarck no doubt envisaged that their material resources would be pooled. This they failed to do, and it proved a fatal error.

It was largely due to Allied unpreparedness that Hitler was able to realize his programme. If Great Britain had felt strong enough, she would not have refused to join France in preventing the Germans from remilitarizing the left bank of the Rhine with a view to an invasion of France, and she would not have permitted the criminal aggressions of the Nazis against the small nations which stood in their way.

She should have been in a position to help France in a land war in proportion to her material resources and her man-power. The two nations together could then have resisted Germany on an equal footing.

Being unable to count on this assistance, France put her trust in a defensive position, and when it came to a war of movement, her resistance was promptly broken. Hitler destroys his enemies one by one, and he won the Battle of France.

Having relied on her Navy and on the efficacy of the blockade, Great Britain now stands alone before a triumphant enemy who has nothing more to fear from a blockade and who threatens to invade her. He has come dangerously near to the English coasts. He is placing long-range guns on the French cliffs opposite, which will command the narrowest part of the Straits of Dover and can reach the towns on the south-east coast and objectives farther inland.

A few years ago Lord Baldwin, at that time Prime Minister, said that Britain's frontier was on the Rhine. The British smiled at this remark, which they took for a paradox, but in France it was looked on as a truth which it was thought that the British would henceforth realize. It was hoped that they would take precautions in consequence, and satisfaction was felt that the alliance was at last in being. But was there not the British Navy and the Channel, which was believed to be impassable? And had not the French their Maginot Line?

We are now witnessing the Battle of Britain, trusting that Germany will fail and that Britain will defend herself victoriously. We hope still more that she will then be able to take the offensive, for a true victory can only be gained by attacking. It is wholly to France's interest that the British Empire should win, and countless Frenchmen ardently desire its victory.

If a new order is to be introduced into Europe, let it not be an order imposed by the dictators.

CHAPTER 8

LABOUR AND THE WAR

BY HERBERT TRACEY

Publicity Officer of the Trades Union Congress

ON September 2nd, 1939, the day after Germany's armed forces began the invasion of Poland, two decisions were taken by the responsible committees of the Labour Party which defined the position of the British Labour Movement in relation both to the war itself and to the Government then in office. The National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and the Parliamentary Labour Party's Executive Committee jointly declared on that day their resolve to support the action which the British and French Governments were required to take in fulfilment of their treaty obligations to Poland ; but the two Committees at the same time unanimously agreed that the Party could not accept an invitation to join the Government. Almost exactly nine months later, on May 10th, 1940, the Labour Party assumed the responsibility of full partnership in the new War Government formed by Mr. Churchill : two of the Party's representatives, its Leader and Deputy-Leader, entered the War Cabinet of five members, and a dozen offices of major importance for the conduct of the war were assigned to Labour Ministers.

The complete list of these appointments is as follows :

Lord Privy Seal

RT. HON. C. R. ATTLEE

Minister without Portfolio

RT. HON. ARTHUR GREENWOOD

First Lord of the Admiralty

RT. HON. A. V. ALEXANDER

Minister of Labour

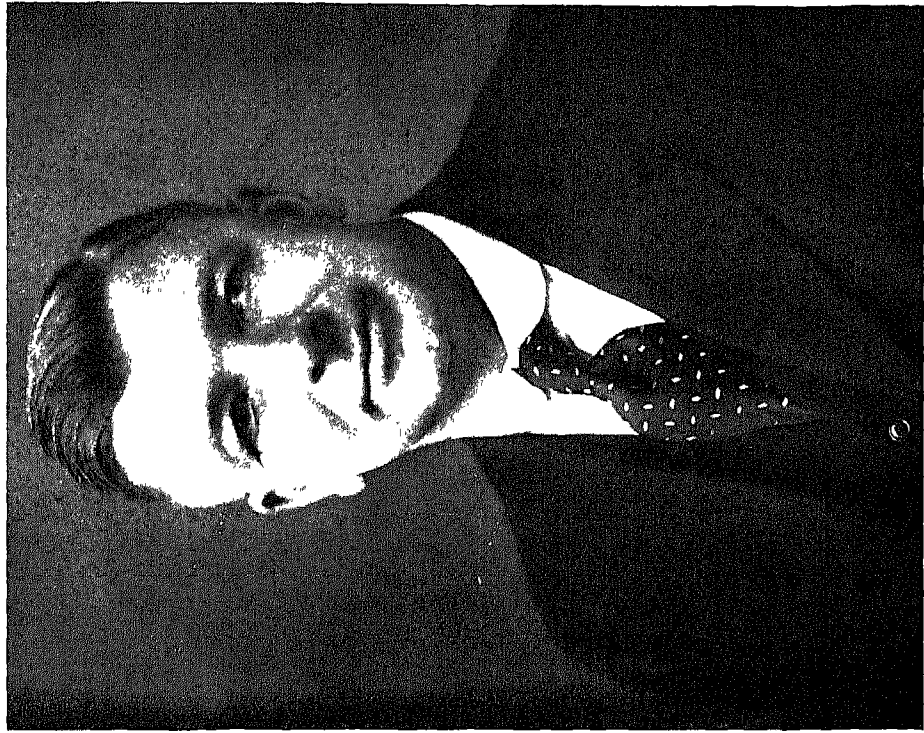
RT. HON. ERNEST BEVIN

Minister of Economic Warfare

RT. HON. HUGH DALTON



THE RT HON HERBERT MORRISON



THE RT HON A. V ALEXANDER

Solicitor General

RT. HON. SIR WILLIAM JOWITT

Minister of Supply

RT. HON. HERBERT MORRISON

Parliamentary Secretary Board of Education

MR. J. CHUTER EDE

Parliamentary Secretary Mines Department

MR. D. R. GRENFELL

Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies

MR. G. H. HALL

Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Transport

MR. FRED MONTAGUE

Under-Secretary of State for Scotland

MR. JOSEPH WESTWOOD

Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Pensions

MISS ELLEN WILKINSON

Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Agriculture

MR. TOM WILLIAMS

Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury

RT. HON. SIR CHARLES EDWARDS

Lord Commissioner

MR. WILFRED PALING

Comptroller His Majesty's Household

MR. WILLIAM WHITELEY

Captain of the Gentlemen at Arms

LORD SNELL

The decisions taken by the Labour Party at the outbreak of war were in no sense inconsistent with its earlier declarations of policy. There was no inconsistency even in the Party's unanimous refusal of an offer of places in Mr. Chamberlain's Government when the war began and its acceptance of Mr. Churchill's invitation nine months later. With the rise of dictatorships which openly proclaimed a reversion to power politics, and particularly after National-Socialism revealed its true character in the destruction of the institutions of free citizenship in Germany, in its defiant avowal of rearmament, and its earliest acts of aggression and conquest, the British Labour Movement foresaw that a general conflict in Europe was probably inescapable. The breakdown of the World Disarmament Conference, and the growing impotence of the League of

Nations as one after another of its Member-States repudiated their obligations, did not indeed destroy Labour's belief in the necessity of collective action to maintain peace ; year after year in its annual assemblies it declared its conviction that war could be prevented, the arms race stopped, and the League of Nations made strong again ; but it was equally convinced that a change of Government was required to bring these things about.

A clear statement of the policy which controlled the action of the Labour political leaders when war broke out was presented in 1937 to the Trades Union Congress and the annual Conference of the Party, under the title *International Policy and Defence*. It summarized fully the sequence of events which marked the worsening of international relations, and declared that the situation could be changed only by the advent of a new Government :

" Such a Government (said the Report) must be in a position to make a powerful appeal to the Fascist States to agree to the abandonment of the Arms Race and the acceptance of a General Disarmament Treaty.

" Such a Government, in the present state of the world, must also be strongly equipped to defend this country, to play its full part in Collective Security, and to resist any intimidation by the Fascist Powers designed to frustrate the fulfilment of our obligations.

" Such a Government, therefore, until the change in the international situation caused by its advent had had its effect, would be unable to reverse the present programme of Rearmament.

" Such a Government, however, would immediately re-examine the whole provision made for Defence in the light of the international situation and the new foreign policy which it would inaugurate.

" The British Labour Movement, fully conscious of the dangers which today threaten our civilization, refuses to accept the doctrine of the inevitability of war, and will continue to exert all its influence to promote a durable peace based upon friendship and justice between nations and respect for international law."

This declaration possessed both a practical and historical significance. It emphasized the Movement's fidelity to the principles of a foreign policy which sought to organize peace through international association : but it also recognized the impossibility of escaping war by unilateral effort in the direction of disarmament, and accepted the

obligation of rearmament for the double purpose of national defence and the reinforcement of Britain's power to assist in securing the observance of international law. Every fresh violation of the rights of free nations by the Fascist Powers fortified the British Labour Movement in its resolve to pursue this two-fold aim. It involved the Party in Parliament in an apparent paradox. The Party's policy in ceaselessly insisting upon the effective organization of the nation for war but withholding all support from the succession of "National" Governments that pledged themselves to a vast programme of rearmament, exposed it to criticism and reproach. This never slackened during the period of "appeasement." It reached the height of vituperation against Labour as the war party when Mr. Chamberlain brought back from Munich the documents that were supposed to guarantee peace in our time.

Suspicion of a fundamental contradiction in Labour's policy was not finally dispelled until its entry into the Government. But long before this event took place the Movement had given ample proof of its determination to accept the logical consequences of its demand that resistance to the aggression of the Fascist Powers should be strong and effective. Its declaration of solidarity with the nation when the armed struggle with Nazi Germany began was emphatic and unequivocal: the Trades Union Congress, meeting at Bridlington on September 4th, the day after Mr. Chamberlain as Prime Minister announced that a state of war existed between Britain and Germany, lacked nothing in force and clarity:

"This Congress believes that the Nazi Government, having chosen for its people the way of War, must be resisted to the utmost. It must be opposed by all the forces that the civilized nations can concentrate for its defeat and overthrow. The defeat of ruthless aggression is essential if liberty and order are to be re-established in the world. Congress, with a united and resolute nation, enters the struggle with a clear conscience and steadfast purpose."

Nor was there anything lacking in the response of the Trade Unions to the call for national service. For many months before war was declared the General Council of the Trades Union Congress was engaged in developing important activities in connexion with the organization of the Civil Defence services and the mobilization of the country's industrial resources. Foundations were laid for the husbanding of the nation's

man-power by the framing of a schedule of reserved occupations. This was designed to prevent the indiscriminate recruitment of workers who could best serve the nation's needs by carrying on with their work. The Unions co-operated with the Ministry of Labour in framing the schedule and in its modification from time to time. They took an active part, too, in the organization of the voluntary National Service Scheme for Civil Defence, including the recruitment of A.R.P. workers, for which a National Co-ordinating Committee and a network of local Voluntary Service Committees upon which the Trade Unions were fully represented came into existence. And the T.U.C. General Council were also deep in consultations upon proposals for dealing with important problems of labour in war-time. These did not, however, find a practical solution until the war had actually begun. Developments then took place in the industrial sphere with a rapidity which contrasted rather sharply with the more leisurely and even languid conduct of operations in other fields.

The Trade Unions, let it be said, were far from being satisfied at this stage with the Government's handling of industry's war problems. As long ago as 1935, in the second of the White Papers on National Defence, the Government recognized that its rearmament programme would entail a heavy strain on industry and that the fullest co-operation of employers and workpeople would be required to give effect to it. But very little was done to inform the Unions of what was expected from them or to engage their active interest in the vast scheme for extending industrial equipment and providing the trained personnel for war production. Not only the apathy of individual Ministers but also the inertia of Government departments concerned with production and supply had to be overcome.

The official declaration of war was made on September 3rd, 1939. It was almost exactly a month later, on October 4th, that the first steps were taken, on the initiative of the T.U.C. General Council, to associate the Trade Unions and employers' representatives more closely with the organization of the nation's war effort. A joint conference of the T.U.C. General Council and the British Employers' Confederation was then held, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Ernest Brown), at which it was decided to set up a Joint Advisory Council to deal with "matters in which employers and workers have a common interest" and to advise the Minister upon them. Fifteen members from each side were chosen to constitute this Council. Two weeks later its scope and composition were agreed upon. A fortnight later, on November 1st, its first

meeting was held. This leisured gait did not please the T.U.C. Impatience was intensified by the apparent reluctance of some of the Government departments to consult with the representatives of the Trade Unions upon the multiplying problems arising out of the emergency legislation and the pressure of war conditions affecting the working people. The T.U.C. General Council felt it to be necessary, in fact, to approach the Prime Minister himself at the end of the first month of war and put before him its view of the situation.

Its view, in a word, was that the Unions were not being consulted nor their co-operation sought by any of the Departments as fully and as freely as the Unions desired. Mr. Chamberlain was told that this was particularly true of the Ministry of Supply. A definite request was made that there should be Trade Union representation on every national, regional, and local committee set up by that Ministry. It lies beyond the scope of this chapter to describe the Ministry's remarkable system of "controls" and the activities of its still more remarkable host of "controllers," practically all of whom were drawn from the trades they controlled. The system was only partially leavened by Trade Union representatives when, as a consequence of a direct instruction from the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Supply, along with the Ministry of Food, the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Economic Warfare, as well as the Service departments and the Ministry of Labour, took the Unions into a warmer embrace.

The Prime Minister's instruction to the Departments was to the effect that the Government desired them to maintain the closest possible relations with the Trade Unions and to create the necessary machinery for systematic and continuous consultation and co-operation. One fairly immediate result was the setting up of district advisory committees by the Ministry of Supply to speed up the production of munitions. Seventeen such bodies were created, with representation for the Trade Unions on each of them, and the number was later increased to twenty-three; but it could not be said that they were functioning at all vigorously before the change of Government brought Mr. Herbert Morrison to the Ministry of Supply. Their main task was to survey the industrial resources of their areas and to ascertain how far these resources were being utilized. They were an indispensable adjunct of the Government's planning of war production on a nation-wide basis. When representatives of the Board of Trade were added to them, these area advisory bodies also took account of the requirements of the export trades. Production engineers were

also added to assist on the technical side, and steps were taken to associate with them the other Government departments concerned with supply of munitions, including the three Service Ministries—that is to say, the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Air Ministry. Trade panels and joint advisory committees were also established for the control of raw materials, including clothing, non-ferrous metals, magnesite ore, wool, steel, timber, and other requisites of the war trades.

The principle of Trade Union representation was similarly asserted in the work of other Ministries. Thus, in the case of the Ministry of Food a central advisory committee was set up to assist the Minister in carrying out the rationing scheme and to advise on the allocation of food supplies. As an illustration of the scope of this machinery it may be mentioned that the Government's plan of control for meat and livestock, involving the concentration of slaughtering in selected centres, brought into operation fifty tribunals operating on a county basis. On all of them Trade Union representatives were appointed to serve. A very large number of local food committees, most of them created before the Food Ministry had been sufficiently impressed by the necessity of securing the co-operation of the Trade Unions, had also to be brought into line. These committees were part of the food control machinery of the local Public Authorities, and the Trade Unions were overlooked. The Minister was obliged under pressure from the T.U.C. General Council to issue an amending Order providing that a Trade Union representative must be appointed to a local food committee if the appropriate Union organization in the locality wished this to be done. On some twenty technical committees set up by the Ministry to deal with specific commodities, the same principle was enforced. So also with the fuel committees which the Mines Department set up to advise the local fuel overseers. And so, too, with the Board of Trade's machinery for the regulation of prices and the prevention of profiteering: there are some seventeen regional Price Regulation Committees at work in connexion with the Central Committee, and Trade Union representation was secured on all of them.

Such developments in the mere mechanism of Government control, though they gave the Labour Movement some measure of responsibility, did not lessen the Movement's anxiety as to the general conduct of the war by Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues. Repeated attacks were made by the Labour Party in Parliament on individual Ministers and upon the Government as a whole as the country's state of relative unprepared-

ness was progressively disclosed, and the feeble character of its leadership spread dismay in wider circles. In April 1940, the Government's handling of the man-power problem was bitterly assailed from the Labour benches. Three weeks later, on May 7th and 8th, a debate was forced upon the whole issue of the war leadership, in particular connexion with the collapse of the Allied expedition in Norway. As the debate developed, the Labour Party felt it to be its duty to challenge the Government's hold upon the confidence of the House. Although on a division the Government secured the vote of 281 of its supporters, against 200 in the Opposition lobby, the Prime Minister rightly interpreted the result as a sentence of dismissal for his Administration, and one that was all the more decisive because some 37 of his own supporters, many of them Service members, voted with the Opposition against him. Nevertheless Mr. Chamberlain in the next twenty-four hours strove to avert execution of the sentence by seeking the Labour Party's co-operation in the formation of a new Government under his leadership. Whilst the delegates to the annual Conference of the Labour Party were assembling at Bournemouth, their leaders, Mr. C. R. Attlee and Mr. Arthur Greenwood, took a decisive stand in the negotiations. With the unanimous approval of the National Executive of the Party they refused point blank to serve in any administration formed by Mr. Chamberlain. But they made it clear on the other hand that the Labour Movement would support a War Government with Mr. Churchill at its head, and that the Party would accept the responsibilities of office if the Government were founded upon a small War Cabinet capable of conducting the war with energy, efficiency, and determination. It was, of course, implicit in the decision of the Party to challenge in Parliament a vote upon its accusation that the Chamberlain Government was failing in its task, that the Party must assume a real measure of responsibility in any change of Government that resulted from the vote in the House. The effect of the vote was to convince Mr. Chamberlain that he must make way for Mr. Churchill, whose capacity to form a new administration the leaders of the Labour Party so strongly reinforced.

Negotiations were of necessity conducted under conditions of haste and urgency. The leader of the Labour Party told the annual Conference a few hours later that on the very night when they were faced with the question whether they would support Mr. Chamberlain in a reconstructed Government, or join Mr. Churchill in a new War Cabinet, Holland and Belgium were invaded by the Nazi armies. The great

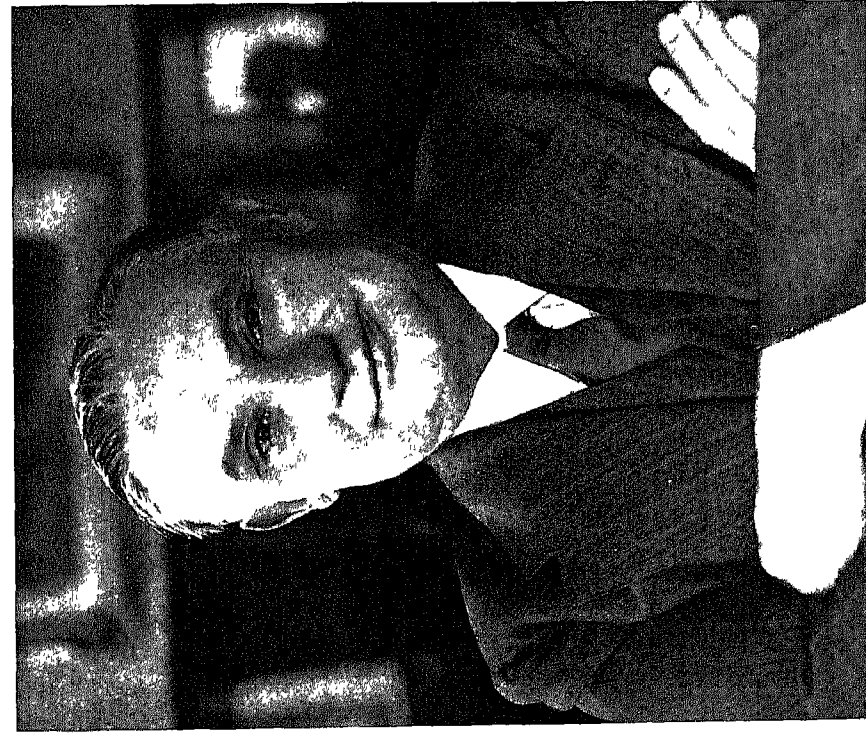
crisis of the war had come. There was no time to consider, from the standpoint of general policy, the implications of the Party's entry into the Government. They could not even stipulate what the representation of the several parties should be, and had to accept the fact that some persons would be included in the new Government whom they might wish to exclude, and others left out whom they could wish to bring in. But the National Executive of the Party, having given its leader and deputy-leader a free hand in the negotiations, felt no hesitation whatever in sustaining the position they took up. When the Conference of the Party assembled for its first session on Whit-Monday, May 13th, the new War Cabinet was already in being.

Its mandate, as far as the Labour Movement was concerned, found its confirmation in the following resolution adopted at the Bournemouth Conference :

" This Conference endorses the unanimous decision of the National Executive that the Labour Party should take its share of responsibility as a full partner in a new Government, which, under a new Prime Minister, commands the confidence of the nation. This Conference further pledges its full support to the new Government in its efforts to secure a swift victory and a just peace."

The resolution was adopted by 2,413,000 votes to 170,000. The small minority vote was by no means homogeneous. It comprised delegates who held that the war was the outcome of Imperialist rivalries and should be stopped, delegates who urged that only a Socialist Government could win the war, and an ingredient of pure pacifism—from which the Labour Movement has never been entirely immune.

In the course of the discussions upon the composition of the new Government, Labour's plenipotentiaries (Messrs. Attlee and Greenwood) urged upon Mr. Churchill the vital importance of organized Labour having its direct representatives in the new Government—that, in other words, the industrial wing of the Labour Movement, as well as the political wing, should be directly associated with the Government. Mr. Churchill was fully aware of the part played by the Trade Unions in the organization of the national war effort and much too shrewd and far-seeing to wish to deprive his Administration of Trade Union support. He had already taken steps, it appeared, to invite one of the ablest and most influential Trade Union leaders to accept office: during the meetings of the T.U.C. General Council, the National Council of Labour, and the National



THE RT HON ERNEST BEVIN



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THE RT HON HUGH DALTON

Executive of the Labour Party, at Bournemouth in that hectic Whitsun weekend, it became known that Mr. Ernest Bevin, the general secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and a prominent member of the Trades Union Congress, had been asked by the Prime Minister to serve as Minister of Labour. Mr. Bevin sought the support of the T.U.C. General Council and of the Executive Council of his own Union before making up his mind to accept this appointment, which was perceived to be a "key" appointment in more than one sense of the word. The General Council of the Trades Union Congress unanimously declared that Mr. Bevin would have their fullest support as Minister of Labour in the new Government. With equal unanimity his Union Executive gave Mr. Bevin "leave of absence" for the duration of his appointment. Mr. Bevin held no seat in Parliament, but he obtained one, as Member for Central Wandsworth, in an uncontested election, a few weeks after he took over the Ministry of Labour.

Importance attached to the inclusion of a strong and able trade unionist in the new Administration, primarily because the mobilization of industrial man-power for war production was clearly a necessity of the moment. One of the principal indictments of the previous Government was that it had failed to make the best use of all available labour: in the debate in the House of Commons on April 16th, Mr. Chamberlain and his colleagues were severely criticized on the ground that they had no real plan for the organization of production. When the new Government met the House one of its first measures was an Emergency Powers (Defence) Bill which conferred complete control over all persons and property for the prosecution of the war, and many of these powers of control were vested in the Minister of Labour.

Under the new Emergency Act the Minister of Labour was endowed with the authority to direct any person to perform any service required of him, not necessarily service in munitions or factories, and not only workmen. The Minister was empowered to prescribe the terms of remuneration, the hours of labour, and the conditions of service—and it was laid down as a guiding principle by the Minister in charge of the Bill (Mr. Attlee) that the rate of remuneration was to be on the basis of the "rate for the job." Control over property was no less absolute than the control over man-power which was vested in Ministers when this Bill was enacted. Industrial establishments of every description whose plant and equipment were necessary for war production came under Government control immediately, and other establishments have been passing

under control as the scope of war production has widened. Factories and workshops in the war trades were set to work, in effect, on Government account. Wages and profits were brought under Government control. Excess profits were taxed at the rate of 100 per cent.

Organization of labour supply raised problems which directly affect the Trade Unions. The advent of an experienced and far-seeing Trade Union administrator like Mr. Bevin at the Ministry of Labour was therefore a development of exceptional interest to the Trade Unions. It was within this field of administration that Labour's influence upon the country's war organization became immediately apparent. The very first step taken by Mr. Bevin was to bring the Trades Union Congress and the British Employers' Confederation into more intimate contact with the Ministry. He proposed that a permanent Consultative Committee, composed of seven representatives from each of these two bodies, should be established to advise him as Minister of Labour on all matters arising out of the Emergency legislation which vested in him such extensive powers of control. The fourteen members of this Consultative Committee were forthwith chosen :

For the T.U.C.

Sir Walter Citrine
Mr. George Hicks, M.P.
Mr. Ebby Edwards
Mr. A. Conley
Mr. J. Hallsworth
Mr. J. Kaylor
Mr. Charles Dukes

British Employers' Confederation

Mr. H. F. Brand
Mr. Basil Sanderson
Mr. W. M. Wiggins
Sir Alexander Ramsay
Mr. W. A. Lee
Mr. Herbert Kay
Sir John Forbes Watson

This body constitutes what may be called the Industrial Cabinet of the Minister of Labour. For executive purposes Mr. Bevin established a Labour Supply Board consisting of four experienced industrialists and trade unionists :

Mr. Richard Coppock (National Federation of Building Trades Operatives)
Mr. J. C. Little (ex-President, Amalgamated Engineering Union)
Major-General K. C. Appleyard
Mr. A. P. Young (British Thomson-Houston Company)

These four Directors of Labour Supply form the Board through which the Minister exercises his power to direct any person in the kingdom to perform specified services, and to secure the efficient utilization of all man-power and industrial equipment required for war production. In close connexion with this central board a network of local Labour Supply Committees was formed, with officials of the Ministry's employment exchanges and representatives of the Trade Unions and employers in the area, to advise on all questions concerning the distribution of labour and the employment of industrial equipment in each area. Inspectors of labour supply were appointed to ensure that labour was used to the fullest advantage in every area, that industrial establishments were being efficiently managed, and that adequate facilities were being provided for the training of unskilled and semi-skilled labour for the higher skilled crafts. National Service officers were also appointed through whom the Minister of Labour could exercise his power to put any persons on to work of national importance where and when necessity arose.

Relations between the Minister of Labour and the Trade Union side of the Labour Movement were, because of the nature of his task, necessarily more intimate than those of his Party colleagues who were appointed to other Government Departments. Mr. Herbert Morrison as Minister of Supply was concerned more with technical problems in the organization of industry for intensive production of arms and munitions. Mr. Hugh Dalton at the Ministry of Economic Warfare, like Mr. A. V. Alexander at the Admiralty, toiled in a field of administration with which the leaders of the organized working-class movement outside the Government had fewer points of contact. No such apparatus of consultation and co-operation as Mr. Bevin and Mr. Morrison developed for the Trade Unions on the lines described above were required by the Minister of Economic Warfare or the First Lord of the Admiralty. The detailed explanation given of the machinery of consultative committees and other advisory bodies which established the connexion of organized Labour with the Ministry of Labour applies also to the Ministry of Supply; but Mr. Morrison's administrative talents and capacity for getting things done found their exercise in a peculiarly difficult task. He was assigned, at the height of a crisis in the supply of munitions which caused profound anxiety, to a Ministry whose general layout, as he told the House of Commons later, was not his, and he had to take the Department as he found it. It lies outside the scope of this chapter to deal with the work of Mr. Morrison, Mr. Dalton, and Mr. Alexander, except in so far as it

demonstrates Labour's full partnership in the tasks of the War Administration. Their competence for the work they undertook is proved by the energy generated within their Departments for stronger and bolder action in prosecuting the war. Mr. Morrison was able to give the House of Commons, two months after he assumed responsibility for the Ministry of Supply, some remarkable figures of percentage increases in the output of arms and munitions. The full story of the measures taken by Mr. Morrison to speed up production and expand industrial equipment was reserved, as Mr. Dalton reserved his exposition of the conduct of economic warfare, for secret sessions of Parliament. What was made public testified to the galvanic effect of the changes made when the new Government took up the reins.

Significant changes in the distribution of functions and in the " demarcation " of the respective spheres of responsibility as between the various Ministers were announced soon after the War Cabinet was formed. The work of Ministers concerned with Defence is necessarily co-ordinated and controlled by the Prime Minister himself as Minister of Defence. He is assisted by a Defence Committee composed by the heads of the three Service Departments—namely, the First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. A. V. Alexander), the Secretary of State for War (Mr. Anthony Eden), and the Secretary of State for Air (Sir Archibald Sinclair)—with the chiefs of staffs as advisers. Questions of foreign policy are in the hands of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, who as a member of the War Cabinet can communicate directly with his colleagues upon these questions at their daily meetings. It is within the sphere of economic organization that the Government's activities have been most drastically overhauled, and in which the influence of the Ministers representing the Labour Movement is most potently exercised.

Five Ministerial bodies were called into existence when the new War Cabinet took control. These include a Production Council, whose function was to give general direction as to the organization and the priority of production for war purposes. The chairmanship of this Council was entrusted to Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Labour's Minister without Portfolio in the War Cabinet. At the Council meetings the heads of the Supply and Service departments confer with one another, and under Mr. Greenwood's guidance the activities of the production departments of the Admiralty and War Office, the Ministry of Aircraft Production, the Ministry of Supply, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Mines are brought into harmony with the resources of man-power at the command

of the Ministry of Labour. An Economic Policy Committee, also under the chairmanship of Mr. Arthur Greenwood, conceives and directs general economic policy and keeps the various Ministries in line with the War Cabinet. The third Ministerial body is the Food Policy Committee, which deals with all food questions, including food-production. Its chairman is the Lord Privy Seal, Mr. C. R. Attlee, who is also responsible for the fourth Ministerial body, the Home Policy Committee. As its chairman, Mr. Attlee has oversight of all questions relating to the Home Front and the social services. His Committee is also responsible for the framing of regulations and draft legislation. A fifth Ministerial body is the Civil Defence Committee which, under the chairmanship of the Home Secretary, deals with all problems of civil defence, including the civil aspects of home security. Co-ordination of these co-ordinating committees is raised to a fine point by the creation of still another committee whose function it is to ensure that the five Ministerial committees work harmoniously, adjust their differences, and leave no part of the field uncovered. This Committee consists of the Lord Privy Seal, the Minister without Portfolio, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the Lord President as its chairman; translating titles into persons, this means that Mr. Neville Chamberlain presides over a small group of his colleagues, Mr. Attlee, Mr. Greenwood, and Sir Kingsley Wood. There is also a Brain Trust constituted by the Survey of Economic and Financial Plans, whose chairman is Lord Stamp, and whose staff of economic experts collects and collates statistics relating to the development of the nation's war effort, and reports on the progress achieved by departments in giving effect to decisions on economic questions reached by the Ministerial bodies already enumerated. The Survey revolves in the orbit of Mr. Greenwood's Economic Policy Committee.

This brief description of the inside organization of the Government is not irrelevant in view of the importance of the functions assigned to Labour's representatives in the War Cabinet. Both Mr. Attlee and Mr. Greenwood occupy positions of highest responsibility at the centre of the Government organization. Government decrees, in the form of statutory regulations and Orders-in-Council which issue from the various Ministries, come under the scrutiny of Mr. Attlee's committee. So does the legislation brought before Parliament. Mr. Greenwood's responsibilities in guiding and co-ordinating the activities of the departments concerned with production, and in deciding questions of priority in production, bring into intimate association the other two Ministers, both of them Labour

men, who have authority to apply formidable powers of direction and control in the industrial sphere: Mr. Bevin, as Minister of Labour, charged specifically with the task of supplying the labour required by the various Government departments, and Mr. Herbert Morrison, as Minister of Supply, whose authority ranges over the factories and workshops in which Mr. Bevin's mobilized man-power is to be utilized.

Notwithstanding the Labour Party's assumption of "full partnership" in the country's Government, its members in the House of Commons hold sternly aloof from the politics of coalitionism. Mr. Churchill's Government is not founded upon a coalition of parties: it is a Government of national union, and the parties upon whose support it depends are in a curious way at once its friends and its critics. This, at least, is true of the Labour Party, which continues to occupy the Opposition benches in the House, though its Opposition functions are much restricted. After its leading members entered the Government an Administrative Committee was elected by the Parliamentary Party to occupy the Opposition Front Bench, and to act as an Executive Committee with an elected acting-chairman (Mr. Lees-Smith) as temporary custodian of the leader's authority within the Party. This Administrative Committee comprises those members of the old Parliamentary Executive who did not enter the Government, together with those members, likewise not in the Government, who are entitled to sit on the Front Bench, Ministers who were members of the Parliamentary Executive becoming *ex-officio* members of this Administrative Committee. By these arrangements the Labour Party maintains its separate identity, and to some extent its independent voice and freedom of action for Parliamentary purposes. But that the Party's independence and freedom will fortify and not injure the unity of the nation and the political solidarity of the Government is guaranteed by the fact that (in Mr. Attlee's phrase) Labour entered the Government as partners and not as hostages, with the unqualified support of the Party in Parliament and the full assent of the organized Movement behind them.

CHAPTER 9
THE WAR OF WORDS
BY CHRISTOPHER STONE

WHEN Mr. Duff Cooper was appointed Minister of Information in Mr. Winston Churchill's Government, he lost no time in availing himself of the new means of disseminating his opinions at home and abroad by broadcasting for a few minutes after the six-o'clock news bulletin on May 16th, 1940 ; and, after declaring that in his view the function of the Ministry was to provide "the maximum of information in the minimum of time," stipulating only that the accuracy of the information was of paramount importance, even if it caused delays, he reminded—or perhaps only told—his listeners of the Homeric description of Rumour stalking through the world, a huge and sinister figure of Evil, and he quoted a saying by Field-Marshal Lord Haig during the March retreat of 1918, "No news is ever so good or so bad as it sounds when you first hear it."

Mr. Duff Cooper's immediate predecessor, Sir John Reith, at one time the pioneer Director-General of the B.B.C., had not taken this course of using the microphone in order to introduce and establish himself in the guise of the Government's Minister of Information to the public. But whether the Minister chose to broadcast in person or not was relatively immaterial. What concerned the public chiefly was that Sir John Reith, who took up his duty on January 6th, was recognized as a first-rate organizer and a man of vision who was well acquainted with the problems of Radio and with the relations between Radio and the Press, while Mr. Duff Cooper, who succeeded him on May 15th, was a politician of outstanding ability and experience with an honourable record in warfare, literature, and journalism.

It was on these grounds that the prospect of producing a sane and efficient weapon of warfare out of the Ministry was, in the ninth month of the war, no longer regarded as unlikely. Hopes ran high that at last something worth while would emerge, and the average citizen, from the moment when the Lowlands caught fire, was ready to suppose that the

Ministry was coming into action and fulfilling its object of supplying the maximum of information in the minimum of time to Press and Radio public alike.

On many occasions subsequent to the first, whenever the urgency of the news justified it, Mr. Duff Cooper or the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry, Mr. Harold Nicolson, already recognized before the war as one of the outstanding "Radio personalities" of the time, came to the microphone at the peak hour of listening to describe and interpret the events of the day; and it was possible to do this because Mr. Duff Cooper regularly attended the meetings of the War Cabinet and was therefore in a position to speak to the world with an unchallengeable authority. No departmental delays or hesitations could make those broadcasts jejune or ineffective. They were distinguished by a tonic, reassuring, and cultured quality which lost none of its life by being essentially official, and it was interesting to listeners to note how sensitively the B.B.C. responded to the new spirit and how quickly a certain ease and power began to pervade the whole range of broadcast talks, commentaries, and topical interviews.

In the earliest months of the war the criticisms of the Ministry of Information had been too strong to be ignored. They had come mainly from two directions. The Press, British and neutral, was moved to fairly constant protest by the meagreness of the news that was vouchsafed to it, while the listening public seemed to be dissatisfied by the programmes, the talks, and the news bulletins of the B.B.C., which were almost its only source of information and entertainment during the long evenings of the black-out. While noting these phases of opinion, it will be conducive to a fairer judgment to survey, however briefly, the broader aspect of the War of Words.

Word-warfare and the propagation of ideas are immemorial and universal in times of peace and of war; in politics and economics they are of the fibre of human intercourse and, alike in history books and display advertisements, in the hush of chancelleries and the clamour of bazaars, the rivalry of tendentious claims and suggestions and threats is unceasing. The subtler intensity and diffusion of propaganda correspond to the cruder armament, disarmament, or rearmament of competitive race-groups.

When a state of tension develops between nations, word-warfare goes into action in the effort to achieve victory without the arbitrament of arms or to manœuvre the enemy towards internal collapse or to false

hopes in preparation for the inevitable clash. These conditions have been open to observation under a strong light for the last few years, and especially since the time when the B.B.C. ceased to broadcast only in the English tongue.

Lastly, when a state of war, explicit or implicit, exists between two countries or groups of countries, each has to employ and to strengthen its organization for maintaining and fortifying the spirit of its nationals, weakening and shattering the spirit of its enemies, while placating and encouraging the spirit of friendliness in the rest of the world.

For weapons it has the spoken and the written word, the whole gamut of inflexions and type faces, from a whisper to a shout, from a rumour in a bar parlour to a world-wide broadcast, from a slogan on Nelson's Column to a leaflet the size of a book of stamps ; by all the resources of Radio, Cinema, Press, and Theatre ; by newspapers and newsreels, music-hall comedians and politicians, books and magazines, secret agents and public speakers, plays and feature programmes, and by every imaginable form of mental anodyne and stimulant and poison.

With the power of the spoken and written word must be implied the power of that which is also seen in print or on film, the photographs and pictures that likewise soothe or stir or debilitate the mind.

In all this, it may be added, great is the truth and it shall prevail, and in the long run truth pays. Truthfulness is claimed on all sides, and in the present state of the world's morality it is not unreasonable to maintain that where truth is pursued, it is because it pays rather than because it is truth.

If the object of propaganda is to mould and manipulate public opinion, the public of a democratic State is likely to be suspicious of propaganda. Its freedom of thought and speech is a mockery unless it is safeguarded by freedom of hearing ; and it demands the opportunity to decide for itself the degree of truth in the objective information given to it and the opportunity to hear both sides of any question that arises. It is aware that right thinking, orthodoxy, is not only hard to acquire but hard to champion and defend against the active guerrilla tactics of unorthodoxy ; and it resents the uneasy feeling that professional propagandists may be able to destroy the integrity of its ideas and convictions by frontal attacks and subterranean infiltration.

This perhaps helps to explain why the opposition to the way in which the bureaucratic Ministry of Information functioned during the first nine months of the war was voiced chiefly by the professional propagandists

and publicity experts through the Press and in Parliament while the public, docile but alert, was content to accept whatever crumbs of war news the Services thought fit to throw to the world, to hope that our propaganda to foreign countries was better even than Germany's to us, and to concentrate its derision upon the way in which the B.B.C. had risen to the occasion in the matter of entertainment for the troops and those at home.

Propaganda, in this view, was alien to the British character and was likely to be slower than other weapons of war in coming into active and efficient service. Petty jealousies between Civil Servants and Pressmen and between Radio and Press might be expected to continue, and were only to be deplored when they led to a weakening of the Allied effort to defeat the enemy.

The simultaneous arrival of Mr. Duff Cooper at the Ministry of Information and of the Germans on Dutch and Belgian soil caused a notable difference, and since by that time the quality of the B.B.C.'s programmes was also more satisfying to the public, the first phase of the word-warfare may be said to have ended by the middle of May.

During the period that followed the cessation of hostilities in November 1918 to the day when they were resumed in September 1939, propaganda throughout the world had been as active as ever and more complex than hitherto, owing to the addition to its available instruments of the Radio and the talking film and to the sharpening of them by the increased speed and coverage caused by telephotography and the improvement in air transport. The student will find much to provoke thought in a consideration of the legacy which Lord Northcliffe, Minister of Propaganda in 1918—with Sir Campbell Stuart, Mr. Wickham Steed, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, and Mr. H. G. Wells—prepared for a war-exhausted Europe to live upon¹; but the turning-point came when Dr. Goebbels was appointed Director of the German Ministry for National Enlightenment and Propaganda in 1935, with complete control of the German Press—"a piano on which the Government could play," he had said—the German Radio stations and film studios, theatres and concert halls, and indeed of all the channels by which the Nazi régime could be made acceptable to the world at large.

That Dr. Goebbels was successful in inculcating Nazi theories in Germany and in manipulating the public opinion of his country to extol or gloss over any of the radical and often atrocious acts of Herr Hitler in

¹ *Propaganda in the Next War*, Sidney Rogerson. Geoffrey Bles, 1938.

establishing the Third Reich was a demonstration of cunning ruthlessness that revealed a Moriarty among propagandists. That he reached every corner of the world with the tentacles of his sleepless organization was a matter of grudging admiration among those whose business it was to keep track of his activities ; but it was soon evident that he could not hope to make the Nazi régime agreeable to other nations except those which belonged or would belong to the Axis.

Elsewhere his methods were menacing, disturbing, and mischievous. Brow-beating and bullying Vienna, Prague, and Warsaw, grossly and ingeniously lying about the Arabs in Palestine, stirring up trouble in India, sneering at the attempts to localize the Spanish Civil War, the German propaganda in all its forms tended inevitably to alarm and alienate public opinion in every country.

What is outstanding in a view of the vast ramifications and the truculence and the cleverness of the Goebbels machine is the apparent slenderness of the opposition which it encountered. It was as if the outer world were content to wait for it to break down under the strain of its own sedulous passion.

True, the British Council had already been quietly established under the chairmanship of Lord Eustace Percy before Dr. Goebbels came to power, and three years later, in 1937, Lord Lloyd, as the new chairman, widened and strengthened its sphere of usefulness in the propagation of the British Idea, by encouraging all Anglophile organizations in foreign countries, subsidizing lecture tours by prominent British citizens and the work of the Film Institute, sending the Old Vic Company for a three months' tour of Mediterranean countries, inviting groups of journalists from Norway, Turkey, Spain, Roumania, and Portugal to see Great Britain as guests of the Council, and sending teachers of English to foreign countries and helping foreign students in England with grants.

Sound work at relatively small cost was achieved by the British Council, and though its methods were sometimes open to suspicion of dilettantism, that was not a very damaging criticism.

But apart from this there was little above-ground propaganda. The B.B.C. was content to broadcast in a dignified way to its millions of listeners at home or in the Dominions and to deliver the news of the day and commentaries upon the news with a lack of bias that maintained its prestige without lowering its revenue from licence-holders.

Broadcasts in Arabic to counter the drum-fire of anti-British propaganda from Zeesen and Bari Radio stations were started by the B.B.C.

in January 1938 ; then the news bulletins in Spanish and Portuguese for the benefit of South American listeners followed, and before the outbreak of the war German, Italian, and French were added to the repertoire.

For about two years previously to the actual moment when war was declared, the Government had been examining the question of setting up a Ministry of Information. The Committee of Imperial Defence had set the ball rolling, and various meetings of various representatives of variously interested organizations and departments had taken place. Fundamentally, the problem was whether the Minister of Information should be a member of the War Cabinet, powerful enough to impose his decisions, if agreed by that body, upon the three fighting Services as to the information that should be " released " to the Press and the Radio, or whether his Ministry would be more effective if it were simply a clearing-house and censorship office for information and propaganda. Was it advisable to create something of the nature and scale of a Goebbels organization, or to adhere to a system of compromise which would, with infinite tact, minimize inter-departmental friction so adroitly that the co-operation of the formidably diverse suppliers and diffusers of information in time of war could be welded into an instrument of adequate potency ?

The second alternative seemed to suit the situation better. The Services were reluctant to consider any surrender of their own Press departments, and probably felt that a Minister of Information in a War Cabinet would be a menacing superfluity. The Treasury, the Foreign Office, the Home Office, the B.B.C., and the Post Office, the Colonial Office, the Dominions Office, the India Office, and many other offices and boards had views to expound, and the Press was anxiously watching the efforts to settle upon a Minister of Information and to determine his relations with itself and with Government departments.

Who should be the Minister ? Lord Stanhope of the Board of Education ? Lord de la Warr, his successor ? These were mentioned, but in April 1939 the Government's choice fell upon the Public Trustee. Sir Ernest Fass declined the responsibility, and at the beginning of May Lord Perth, recently Ambassador in Rome, was declared Director-General designate of the Ministry of Information, with immediate control of a Foreign Publicity Department housed in the Foreign Office. The Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, had the responsibility of preparing the necessary plans, and when they were completed they would be kept as a skeleton " without which swift action would be impossible if an emergency arose."

Time marched on. The mass of parallel and divergent recommendations was sifted out by Civil Service experts and reduced to a plan on paper. Even the location of the Ministry was settled, and Post Office engineers unobtrusively laid the necessary connexions for the intricate system of telephone lines for the Press Bureau and other departments.

Where was it? In South Kensington, close to the spot which the trustees had chosen as the ideal site for a National Theatre.

When this became known in Fleet Street, the Press was moved to strong protest on the ground that the Ministry would be too far away from the centre of the newspaper and agency world. Therefore the plan had to be altered, the installation dismantled, and new work started in the most imposing modern building in Bloomsbury to prepare it to accommodate under war conditions the Press Bureau, the Censorship Office, and the various departments of Home and Overseas Propaganda.

On September 3rd, when the News and Censorship Division on the ground floor came into full activity, the telephone operators were working at a huge switchboard which was a skeleton in appearance; for in spite of superhuman efforts during the previous days and nights the engineers were still wrestling with the filigree of wires on the back of it. But the planning of this Division and the efficiency of the preparations in the race against time were applauded by the hundred and more British and foreign journalists who were to use the Press Room.

In view of the strictures that were subsequently aimed at the Ministry, it is important to emphasize the complete success of the organization of this section, and the following tribute from an American journalist is eloquent proof of the impression made in those early days:

"Actually the organization, as such, is there. Monckton¹ inherited, thanks to John H. Brebner, one of the few newsmen in the entire setup, 800 telephones, 70 teleprinters, regiments of mimeograph machines, and squads of cyclists. Everything is there for fast-moving news gathering and dissemination. The place looks like Flemington ready for the Hauptmann trial, only squared and cubed."

Thus Frank Gervasi, cabling from London to *Collier's Weekly*; and French colleagues, M. Gordeaux of the *Paris Soir* and M. Oberlé of *Le Journal*, persuaded Mr. Brebner to join them in a broadcast from all French stations describing the running of the News and Press section in

¹ Sir Walter Monckton, appointed Controller of the Press Censorship and Superintendent of the News Distribution Department at the beginning of October.

Bloomsbury following a visit to it by the French Minister of Information. There is no doubt that this section escaped any criticism from those international journalists who were best fitted to judge it.

Meanwhile Lord Macmillan, Chairman of the Court of the University of London, in whose Senate House the Ministry of Information was housed, had been appointed Minister of Information himself, and in his first speech on the subject in the House of Lords on September 14th he said :

" I indeed require sympathy in the undertaking which has been confided to me and I shall not be unmindful from time to time of the exhortations which I shall not fail to receive on all hands and of which I have already been the grateful recipient to an extent which your Lordships will understand."

" It is," he continued, " a Ministry of Expression, not a Ministry of Repression ; least of all a Ministry of Depression. There is confided to it one of the most difficult, and perhaps I may say dangerous, tasks in wartime which any of us can discharge."

Already some unfortunate examples of repression and depression had occurred. The conflicting verdicts of individual censors on Press matter submitted to their department were overshadowed by the resentment of the Press at the handling of the news that the B.E.F. was in France ; while the listening public had been dismayed by the atmosphere of gloom spread by the B.B.C.'s programmes as much as by its news bulletins.

The news that British troops were in France had been submitted to the censors on Friday, September 8th, and held up till Monday the 11th, when, after French broadcasts revealing the presence of large numbers of British troops in France, the Ministry released the information at 9.40 p.m. Shortly before midnight it was cancelled on the instance of the Secretary of State for War, and when it was made clear that all the London newspapers containing the news had gone to press and that copies were already on trains and motor-vans going to the country, recourse was had to New Scotland Yard, and there ensued a highly effective rounding up by the police of all papers at headquarters and railway stations.

Some of the daily papers started to print editions omitting the news that British troops were in France.

At 2.55 a.m. the Ministry issued a bulletin once more releasing the news that British troops were in France.

The cost of this performance was considerable, even when judged by

the scale on which the rest of the war effort was being conducted, and in the House of Commons Sir Samuel Hoare and Sir John Anderson had to reply to a damaging attack. It was not the only instance, though it was the most glaring up to that moment, of muddle at the Ministry of Information, of which Lord Camrose, a representative of the Press in the House of Lords, said, in the debate on September 14th :

“ The whole thing has been conceived on a scale which has amazed those whose everyday business it is to handle problems of the kind which are entrusted to the Ministry of Information.”

“ The results achieved,” he added a few minutes later, “ are similar to those which you would expect if you tried to run a battleship with a regiment of soldiers. That is the reason for all these delays and censorship decisions which have caused universal trouble.”

A few days later Lord Camrose accepted the post of Assistant Minister of Information and Sir Edward Grigg that of Parliamentary Secretary.

The hunt was up, and with the Press only too ready, in the absence of much diversion in the way of war news and in the consciousness that its advice had been flouted in the past, to bay the quarry, the Ministry was forced into some admissions which caused mingled feelings of consternation and amusement in the public. The number of persons in the employment of the Ministry was revealed as being 999 ; and the extensive appointments of regional directors and staffs, the salaries of the more highly paid individuals and the proportion of Civil Servants to experts in publicity and journalists were also made known.

Lord Macmillan took the opportunity of continuing his statement in the House of Lords on September 24th, when he had had a fortnight in which to appreciate the functions of his Ministry, and he explained very lucidly what those functions were. Firstly, to distribute and transmit the news received from other Government sources and particularly the Service Departments. Secondly, to provide a voluntary censorship to facilitate the publication of matter by the Press ; that is to say, a newspaper man could submit to it anything about which he had doubt, and if it were passed, then it could be published without any anxiety on the part of the editor. Thirdly, to provide and organize an active publicity or propaganda section at home and abroad.

Nine days later, however, the Prime Minister announced that steps were being taken to reorganize the Ministry of Information, and on

October 4th Lord Macmillan explained to the House of Lords that Sir Walter Monckton had agreed to undertake the onerous task of Controller of the Press Censorship and Superintendent of the News Distribution Department, thus relieving the Ministry of nearly all the 127 members of the staff engaged in the News and Press Relations Section and the entire Censorship staff of 306. He had also simplified the scheme of the regional organization and had dispensed with the services of many distinguished and public-spirited men, not a few of whom had been giving their services without remuneration.

It transpired that the transfer was one of responsibility, and not of location. The three sections were still housed in the same building, but Lord Macmillan could now devote himself to Propaganda. It also transpired that the direct contact of the Press with the various Service and other Government Departments had been restored, and that in future the Press Bureau at the Ministry would merely duplicate the news thus issued, for the benefit of those who chose to use it.

These and many other facts were elicited from the Lord Privy Seal (Sir Samuel Hoare) in an important debate in the House of Commons on October 11th which occupies more than a hundred pages of Hansard. Notable criticisms were levelled by Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Mr. de Rothschild, Major Astor, Mr. MacLaren, Mr. Brooke, Mr. Parker, Brigadier-General Spears, Sir Stanley Reed, Dr. Edith Summerskill, Mr. Strauss, Mr. Noel-Baker, Mr. Ridley, and other members, and the last half-hour was taken up by Sir Edward Grigg, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the Ministry.

During the following six months the attacks in the Press tended to diminish, and it became clear that Lord Macmillan, with the able assistance of Lord Camrose (who gave up his honorary position at the end of October), had managed to reduce the Ministry to a state of workable, though still tentative, organization, and that, relieved of the Press Bureau and Censorship Department, he had constructed the remainder in eight divisions as follows: (1) the Foreign Field, neutral and Allies; (2) the Empire; (3) Home Propaganda; (4) U.S.A.; these divisions using the material for propaganda supplied by (5) General Production, (6) Films, and (7) Radio. The eighth division was administrative, and included a section dealing with intelligence, "a reservoir of general information for all the Departments."

Lord Macmillan was succeeded on January 6th by Sir John Reith, and when Mr. Winston Churchill became Prime Minister on May 10th,

Sir John Reith was succeeded by Mr. Duff Cooper. Sir John's reign at the Ministry had been short, but his influence had been widely felt, and Mr. Duff Cooper took over an engine which was by that time "run in."

In the Foreign Field section much had been done to increase and distribute propaganda in neutral and Allied countries. The eighteen Press attachés accredited to Embassies and Legations abroad at the beginning of the war had been more than doubled; and each Press attaché was a valuable link.

"He represents us on the spot and he is a person skilled in publicity. He is able to tell us by his despatches what is the kind of material that is required in that country, and, when the material is sent out, he can arrange for its translation into the language of the country to which he is accredited. He knows the way to disseminate it and he does the work of the Ministry on the spot. As regards that class of official, fortunately this country is singularly rich in people who have had that kind of experience and are willing to take up this difficult task."

Lord Macmillan had explained this in October, and had made it clear that the activities of Press photographers had been largely increased and the results distributed, and also that much had been done to ensure the prompter arrival of our newspapers in foreign countries.

Documentary films and newsreels were getting into their stride and a constant output for the home, Empire, and neutral markets was assured. Books and pamphlets of a propaganda nature were being encouraged by the Ministry. Mr. Somerset Maugham's *France at War*, for instance, was published in March at sixpence, and quickly became a best-seller.

The policy in most cases was, from a financial point of view, to facilitate the production of propaganda and to avoid subsidizing it if possible. In contrast to the German method, the Ministry rather paid its staff to suggest and to assist propaganda than undertook to finance the production of it and to distribute it free to the public at home and abroad. But Dr. Goebbels had been spending at least £6 million—some said £20 million—a year for the last five or six years on his departments.

In general, it may be agreed that the British public is suspicious of the value of anything for which it does not have to pay, which partly accounts for the small percentage of people who bothered to read the Public Information Leaflets which were distributed free, if the statistics given in *War Begins At Home*, by Mass Observation, be accepted, and

for the apathy shown towards such things as gas-masks, air-raid shelters, and evacuation schemes. It may be agreed too that the Fighting Services are not alone in preferring actions to words ; the whole nation is inclined to feel that when there is a job to be done, statements are preferable to exhortations or advice, and talking and boasting are best left to others.

The warfare of words, none the less, has acquired a vast importance ; a development appreciated by the public as clearly as by the Press.

The word spoken into the microphone goes straight instantaneously to the ear of the listener in any part of the world. There are no bars, no delays. Beyond the safety and efficiency of the transmitter and the adequate functioning of the receiver, it is only necessary that the speaker should be intelligible to the listener. What he says can be recorded and re-broadcast over and over again.

Before so massive and intimate a power, it is not surprising that great men have flinched from the thought of the evil uses to which Radio might be prostituted and have bent their efforts to direct it into good channels. Nor is it surprising that the protagonists of the written word have watched its development with alarm and jealousy.

Seven years ago these words were written :

" Governments would have to install radio sets in every private house or in every accessible public meeting-place free if they could not persuade us to install them ourselves at our own expense.

" The provision of ' entertainment ' programmes is merely a device for persuading us that we must have radio sets.

" It is as if we all rushed off to buy a new kind of rubber ball, the latest craze, a new game ; and found that though it did certainly bounce and the game was quite a good one, the real meaning of the ball was that it could be cut open when the emergency arose and would be found to contain a gas-mask.

" The use of radio in our own General Strike not long ago must have opened the eyes of many ; the more recent use of radio for Moscow propaganda and the grip of Hitlerism on German broadcasting are lessons that need no italics for emphasis.

" So let us not expect the B.B.C. to take us too seriously if we prefer Jack Payne to Henry Hall, or either of them to nightingales. The important thing is that our loudspeakers should be switched on when the S.O.S. comes through."

That was written in 1933, when Dr. Goebbels was already implementing the programme which he had persuaded Herr Hitler to formulate on

March 1st as his international Radio objectives and strategy. In *Here Lies Goebbels* (Michael Joseph, 1940, p. 276) Mr. Vernon McKenzie summarizes them thus :

" 1. Prestige. A desire to obtain acceptance for the Nazi régime. This combined elements of pride and bombast.

" 2. Economic. The radio was the first line of attack, to be followed by salesmen on the spot.

" 3. Political. Aggrandisement of the Reich. The effect of ether messages would be followed and consolidated by terrorists and the army.

" 4. Frictional. The radio stirred up trouble, fished in troubled waters, even in areas where disintegrating factors could not be capitalized.

" 5. Cultural. A desire to persuade the world of the merit of Wagnerian and other ' Aryan ' music."

As Mr. McKenzie pointed out, the power-policy nations, Germany, Italy, Russia, had the advantages that State policy and action were united and that they were not handicapped by " the rules of the game."

The British Broadcasting Corporation spent most of those seven years in consolidating its previous achievements as a cultural influence, and aimed successfully at increasing the number of licence-holders without causing unnecessary friction with the Press and the various branches of the entertainment world. In all matters of international politics and economics it exercised its right to air views of nearly every shade of opinion that seemed to contribute to its claim to absolute impartiality. With unperturbed dignity it did its utmost to maintain its integrity and reputation for fairness which were only strengthened when, as sometimes happened, accusations of political bias were hinted at by the watchdogs both of the Left and of the Right. It continued to respect the self-denying ordinance of the International Broadcasting Union that no country should broadcast except in its own languages when other members of the Union had ceased to respect it, and, as already mentioned, it was only after intolerable provocation from Zeesen and Bari that the B.B.C. started broadcasts in Arabic from England in 1938 and, a year later, organized the Foreign News Bulletins Department which was to prove so vital a weapon of propaganda after the actual declaration of war.

Here then, in Radio, was a going concern of incalculable value if

adapted to war conditions, and there was plenty of time in hand for the preparation of plans. But the technical side of broadcast transmissions had its problems on the solution of which all the rest depended; the provision of sufficient wavelengths and transmitters for the multi-lingual twenty-four-hours-a-day bulletins to various parts of the world, the security of installations and studios, the danger that known transmitters in operation would be like beacons in a black-out to guide enemy aircraft, the question of "jamming" enemy stations and of being "jammed" in turn by them, and other problems more nearly concerned with Intelligence.

In anticipation of bombing by enemy aircraft and of attacks upon transmitting stations an elaborate system was evolved for the diffusion and protection of transmitters and studios; and Committees were at work organizing the change-over, if it should ever be necessary, to war service, the programme building for the British Isles, the Empire, and foreign countries; the Foreign News Bulletins Department's expansion, the Home News Bulletins' similar expansion—these in close liaison with the proposed Ministry of Information; and the elaborate "monitoring" service for the taking down of programmes broadcast from abroad in English or in foreign languages.

This monitoring system, which demands a highly specialized staff of linguists and sub-editors working in four shifts a day under conditions of secrecy, was similar to those of France and, presumably, to that of Germany and, perhaps in less thorough degree, of other countries; for in the war of words it is vitally relevant to every propagandist's tactics that he should be constantly aware of the trend and substance of the enemy's verbal attacks. Lies and insinuations have to be countered without a moment's unnecessary delay.

In the planning of the Foreign News Bulletins Department, vision—or perhaps only money—was lacking, and in the early days of the war a brilliant but small staff was much handicapped by being overworked and underhoused. There was a time when the European News Editor with his staff of sub-editors, responsible for preparing news bulletins in German, French, Italian, Czech, Polish, Magyar, Roumanian, and Serbo-Croat, and with their secretaries and typists, was expected to function adequately in two rooms, each about twenty feet by eleven feet in size. Another group-editor was responsible for the bulletins in Spanish and Portuguese for the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America; a third had charge of Arabic, Turkish, and, oddly enough, Greek bulletins.

None the less, in spite of the difficult conditions in which the Department was started, the work performed and the quality of the bulletins put out have been reckoned by general consent to be first rate, and if, by this time, it has been found practicable to allocate one foreign language to each sub-editor only and to expand the accommodation, the staff, and the information, with ampler time for it to be digested, the machine will run with increased momentum and without fatigue. That speed and energy are essential will be agreed if it is realized that the editor of a daily newspaper is only responsible for one unit in twenty-four hours, working to a deadline and catering for one public, while the editors of news transmissions have to produce on one wavelength alone as many quarter-hour bulletins as there is time for in the twenty-four hours—or nearly so. By the end of July, when Dutch programmes had been added to the list, the Foreign News Bulletins Department was broadcasting about two hundred thousand words a day in twenty-four languages.

The other activities of the B.B.C. in its Home News Service, its Home programmes, and its programmes for the Forces have been more easily under the observation of the public, and on that account it is more important in this survey to discuss the difficulties and intricacies of departments upon which the ordinary listener has not been able to form an independent judgment. But there is a parallel method of approach in the war of words, whether a bulletin is designed in English by the B.B.C. for English-speaking listeners, or in any other language for the potential audience ; and it might be governed by these considerations :

(1) General policy (e.g. Allies strong and enemy weak).

(2) Particular diplomatic policy towards the country in question (e.g. whether to frighten a neutral with the totalitarian bogey or rather to instil confidence by playing the bogey down).

(3) The particular lies or false interpretation of facts which the enemy has been putting out in that part of the world, either by wireless or by influence on the vernacular Press (e.g. *Ark Royal*).

(4) The possible lies or misinterpretations officially inspired by the home government in question, either by wireless or newspaper (e.g. the early version of the *Graf Spee* as a German victory).

(5) The natural feelings of the country in question towards the enemy (e.g. the Hungarians tend to admire the Germans but hate the Russians, while in Yugo-Slavia the opposite is the case).

(6) The prejudices or traditions of the audience (e.g. it is useless to preach liberty or similar abstractions to the Italians).

(7) The domestic interests of the audience, whether mainly urban or agricultural.

(8) The tastes and sense of style of the audience (e.g. sentimental atrocities unsuitable for France).

(9) The philosophy or religion of the audience (Freethinking, Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, or Moslem, etc.).

Considerations of that nature are applicable to any designer of bulletins for any Government in any language, and could be observed by any listener to English programmes from France, Germany, Italy, Yugoslavia, etc. With the freedom that we enjoy in this respect the English listener has had ample opportunity to observe and criticize many bulletins and talks which have not been prepared by the B.B.C., and with the assistance of Mr. W. A. Sinclair's brilliant series of broadcasts on "The Voice of the Nazi" (published in pamphlet form), he can judge more shrewdly the trend of what he hears and can discount the effect that it is intended to have upon him.

Dr. Goebbels is said to have some two thousand experts on his propaganda staff, including several renegade British subjects, and it would be idle to deny that, with a clever blend of entertainment and malice, his minions have secured a lively attention in the British Isles. He was particularly lucky in having the services of an announcer, often said to be William Joyce (alias Froelich), who has a very distinct Radio personality, and quickly established himself as a comic figure wherever he was heard. So ingenious and malevolent were his scripts and so insidious his use of them that in the idle months before the invasion of Norway he began to sell his goods, as it were, from house to house up and down the land, till the authorities were sufficiently alarmed by his influence to doubt whether it were wiser to ignore him as hitherto or to counter his activities openly. However, "Lord Haw-haw," as he was quite inappropriately nicknamed, gradually fell into desuetude through boring some listeners and irritating others to the point of being ignored by them completely, while the events of the war were a strong corrective to his propaganda, and the B.B.C.'s improved programmes helped to cold-shoulder him out of attention.

The great improvement in the B.B.C.'s Home programmes and the addition of a daily programme for the Forces on another wavelength are subjects irrelevant to a description of the war of words except in so far as the apparent lack of preparation for the change-over to war-programmes had done more than any other obvious agency to modify

the enthusiasm and fortitude of the Home Front. Even with the bad reception which the new technical scheme of transmissions had caused in many parts of the British Isles, it was generally, if not generously, felt by the listening public that the programmes for the first months of the war, till the great bureaucratic machine was ready to resume its functions in battle dress, did not rise to the unprecedented occasion. But the B.B.C. has, by its nature, always been wide open to criticism, fair or unfair, and in this crucial instance nothing happened that was able to damp the desire of the public to hear the news bulletins and topical talks in the dreary months of the black-out and close-down and bitter weather.

With the outbreak of war the B.B.C. was shorn of its Board of Governors except for the Chairman and one member, and it retained its independence in the matter of programmes, though some of the powers hitherto vested in the Postmaster-General had been transferred to the Minister of Information, who was made responsible for prescribing the hours for broadcasting and had the authority to veto any programme submitted to him, to suspend the television service, and to approve or veto the employment of an officer or servant who was not a British subject. No new powers were involved in this adjustment.

When Lord Macmillan was Minister of Information he disclaimed any wish to interfere with the Corporation's programmes, about which complaints were being made.

"You see," he blandly observed in the House of Lords on October 4th, "you always have the privilege of not listening, which is one of the greatest privileges I know in connexion with the B.B.C."

Subsequent Ministers may be presumed to have manifested a closer and less fastidious watch over the daily programmes which were being devised and produced for the enlightenment and relief of the public mind, and, so far as matters of policy were concerned, Mr. Duff Cooper specifically acknowledged his responsibility and the unfailing co-operation of the B.B.C. The Corporation is, with the expressed intention of the Government, subject to the same requirements of censorship as the Press and, like the Press, has its own liaison officer in the Press Bureau at the Senate House.

With increasing success and ever-steadier purpose the Ministry and the B.B.C. have been continuously occupied in fortifying the Home Front with broadcasts, lectures, leaflets, films, and posters, in usually synchronized co-operation with the Press; and in much the same way have been promulgating the news and the British Idea throughout the Empire

and the neutral countries. The appointment of Sir Stephen Tallents in the spring of 1940 to take charge of both the monitoring system and the Foreign News Bulletins Department of the B.B.C. was hailed with satisfaction as evidence of a resolve to strengthen the power of complementary services under an expert, while the British Council continued to perform its useful propaganda separately.

In the war of words against the enemy Dr. Goebbels had the advantage of being able to flood this country with a constant stream of broadcast propaganda while preventing the German public, under heavy penalties, from listening to our broadcasts in German and even from picking up or reading the leaflets which the Royal Air Force showered over the principal German cities during the early weeks of the war. For the better penetration of Germany a bureau had been started under Sir Campbell Stuart and the first leaflets were dropped from aeroplanes on the very night after war was declared ; and though there was widespread criticism of the contents of the earlier leaflets, the subsequent ones were certainly very much better designed for their purpose, though they were not available to the British public for comment. A variety of other methods which it is better not to describe or discuss were and are used to inform German public opinion, and a certain proportion of our propaganda must be finding its mark.

Latterly, since the capitulation of France and the loss of many Continental radio stations which had been active in Allied propaganda, considerable effort had to be added to the existing network of verbal media—or diverted from it—in order to counter the intensive enemy onslaught on French morale which aimed at destroying the faith of that bewildered nation in the justice of the Allied Cause and then at turning its bewilderment into an active hostility towards the British Empire. The B.B.C. made room in its crowded timesheets for daily programmes by Frenchmen for Frenchmen, and in every way put itself at the disposal of General de Gaulle to assist him to communicate with his countrymen all over the world. From August 26th a daily French newspaper, printed in England, was widely distributed by air and other means among those for whom it was designed.

In the lull of July, when nightly and daily German air raids of an exploratory nature spurred every bulletinist to revive the epithet "sporadic," the first German propaganda leaflets were showered from the night-skies on to pastoral England, and people who picked them up were not slow in selling them to other members of the public as souvenirs for

the benefit of Red Cross funds. The leaflets contained a translation of Hitler's "last chance" speech of July 19th and little else, a speech which had been fully reported already by Press and Radio.

A recrudescence of Press criticism of the Minister of Information also marked the period of suspense in July and August, chiefly in connexion with his consideration of plans to establish a Board of Press Censors, with certain instances of alleged prior information given to the B.B.C. or to American correspondents at the expense of our own Press, with his "Silent Column" or "Anti-Chatterbug" campaign, and with the revelation that the Ministry had been making its own investigations into the trends of public opinion by means of a War-time Social Survey. Mr. Duff Cooper defended himself with spirit and in the War of Words the public rightly regarded these incidents as nugatory and internecine. From August 12th, Mr. Frank Pick, previously at the Ministry of Transport, took over the duties of Director-General of the Ministry of Information from Sir Kenneth Lee, who had held the post without any salary for nine months, and began a reorganization of the Ministry and of its staff which at that date was said to consist of 373 executives in London and forty elsewhere, with salaries at the rate of £264,000 a year.

In this short survey, which covers only the first twelve months of the war, an attempt has been made to describe, and in some degree to explain, the growing-pains of a war machine that was virtually in its infancy when the call to arms came. In this as in other cases it is easy in retrospect to blame the frugal scale of preparation approved by the Government, and not difficult to indicate some of the mistakes and shortcomings that were almost a predictable result of unpreparedness. But, on the other hand, it would be most unfair not to draw attention to the ability and energy and public-spirited patience with which hundreds of men and women strove to build up the structure by improvisation, by team-work, by sheer determination, and by a deep consciousness of the vital importance of their part in the shaping of the final issues. How valuable their contribution, stimulated rather than dismayed by the restless criticisms of the public, has been throughout these months may be gauged by those who, having read so far, reflect on the present state of the Ministry of Information and on the smooth running of the various sections which deal with offence and defence in the war of words and, in their reflections, find that they had almost forgotten the turmoil of the earlier months.

They will, however, chiefly remember that in Mr. Winston Churchill's historic broadcasts the country has a weapon in the war of words that immeasurably transcends the power of all the Goebbels machine and the frenzied fulminations of Herr Hitler. In such nobility and strength of utterance lies the promise of victory.

